



PUBLIC FACT SHEET

VX

What is VX?

VX is a man-made chemical that is tasteless, odorless, and an extremely potent poison. VX is usually found in an oily liquid form and is amber in color. VX is also very slow to evaporate, which means that it can act as a long-term threat to people. It is similar to a material used in certain pesticides but is more poisonous and faster acting. The liquid form of VX can be turned into a gas when heated. The vapor tends to settle in low-lying areas.

What are possible methods of exposure?

- release of VX into the air
 - by breathing the gas
 - by skin or eye contact
 - by absorbing into clothing (clothing can release the vapor gas for about 30 minutes after exposure)
- release of VX liquid into water or food
 - eating foods that have been contaminated by the chemical
 - drinking water or other liquids that have been contaminated by the chemical
 - swimming or playing in contaminated water

VX release could also be used as a weapon of bioterrorism by making the chemical airborne or through inserting it into food/water.

What are possible symptoms of VX exposure?

Symptoms of VX often depend on the amount, duration, and route of exposure. Symptoms can occur from seconds to as much as 18 hours after exposure. The symptoms for VX can include:

Skin contact (small droplets):

- sweating
- muscle twitching

Inhalation:

- low to moderate dose
 - runny nose
 - watery eye
 - eye pain/blurred vision
 - drooling/excessive sweating
 - cough
 - chest tightness
 - rapid breathing
 - diarrhea
 - increased urination
 - confusion
 - drowsiness
 - weakness
 - headache
 - nausea/vomiting
 - stomach pain
 - low or high blood pressure
- high dose
 - loss of consciousness
 - convulsions
 - paralysis
 - respiratory failure which may lead to death

How is VX detected?

VX is difficult to diagnose. The diagnosis is usually based on the clinical symptoms, especially if there is a mass casualty situation where all the victims display symptoms of VX exposure.

What is the treatment for exposure to VX?

- leave area of exposure immediately and seek fresh air
- contact emergency medical authorities
- wash off any liquid of VX with large amounts of water and soap
- remove and contain any clothing in multiple sealed plastic bags
- once decontaminated seek emergency medical treatment
- if swallowed do not induce vomiting wait for emergency personnel

For more information on VX contact:

Ottawa County Health Department

www.miOttawa.org

Center for Disease Control and Prevention

www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/nerve/VX/basics/fact.asp

Phone: (888) 246-2675