



NERVE AGENTS

What are NERVE AGENTS?

Nerve agents are considered chemical warfare agents. These chemicals/gases attack the brain and nervous system, making people unable to function. Nerve agents include sarin, tabun, soman, cyclohexyl sarin, VX, Novichok agents, carbamates and pesticides.

Signs and Symptoms:

Symptoms depend on the route and amount of exposure. Signs include pinpoint pupils, chest tightness, increased saliva and other body fluids, diarrhea, loss of memory and concentration, and loss of consciousness. Respiratory arrest can also occur. Other symptoms include muscle cramps, runny nose, eye pain, blurred vision, sweating, muscle spasms, seizures and paralysis.

Route of exposure:

Primary route is by either inhalation or absorption through the skin or eyes.

Treatment:

Remove person to fresh air. Remove contaminated clothing immediately and rinse skin with fresh water to dilute chemical. Supportive hospital care and medication to treat seizures and low heart rate may be necessary.

Diagnosis:

Based on known or suspected exposure. Lab tests of blood samples can confirm the type of chemical.

What can you do?

Avoid the contaminated area. Emergency response leaders may direct people to evacuate or “shelter in place.”

Whom do you call?

Delaware Division of Public Health: 1-888-295-5156.

Contact Information:

Visit the CDC website for Emergency Preparedness and Response: www.bt.cdc.gov.