

Insert agency name

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Insert date)

For information, contact:
(Insert contact information)

Headline

(Insert information about the event)

Local authorities believe that people who were at (insert location) on (insert date and time) may have been exposed to the chemical sarin. Public Health and other local authorities are investigating this incident.

Sarin is a human-made chemical warfare agent classified as a nerve agent. Symptoms will appear within a few seconds after exposure to the vapor form of sarin and within a few minutes up to 18 hours after exposure to the liquid form. All nerve agents cause their toxic effects by preventing the proper operation of the chemical that acts as the body's "off switch" for glands and muscles. Without an "off switch," the glands and muscles are constantly being stimulated. They may tire and no longer be able to sustain breathing function.

People may not know that they were exposed because sarin has no odor. People exposed to a low or moderate dose of sarin may experience some or all of the following symptoms within seconds to hours of exposure:

- Runny nose;
- Watery eyes;
- Small, pinpoint pupils;
- Eye pain;
- Blurred vision;
- Drooling and excessive sweating;
- Cough;
- Chest tightness;
- Rapid breathing;
- Diarrhea;
- Increased urination;
- Confusion;
- Drowsiness;
- Weakness;
- Headache;

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- Nausea, vomiting, and/or abdominal pain;
- Slow or fast heart rate; and
- Low or high blood pressure.

Even a small drop of sarin on the skin can cause sweating and muscle twitching where sarin touched the skin.

Exposure to large doses of sarin by any route may result in the following harmful health effects:

- Loss of consciousness;
- Convulsions;
- Paralysis; and
- Respiratory failure possibly leading to death.

Treatment consists of removing sarin from the body as soon as possible and providing supportive medical care in a hospital setting. Antidotes are available for sarin. They are most useful if given as soon as possible after exposure.

If you believe you have been exposed, or if you have any of the symptoms associated with sarin poisoning, please seek medical attention immediately.

Public Health may open a mass medication dispensing site. That will be determined in the coming days, and the public will be informed as soon as that decision is made. Please stay tuned to local radio and TV stations for more information.