

Ricin Poisoning



Fact Sheet



Ricin is a poison found in castor beans. When people process castor beans, they can use the leftover waste to make ricin. Ricin can be a powder, liquid, mist, or pellet.

Accidental exposure to ricin is unlikely, except by eating castor beans. A person would need to make ricin on purpose to poison people.

Symptoms

Symptoms of ricin poisoning depend on how a person gets exposed. If people breathe in ricin poison, symptoms can start as early as 4 to 8 hours after exposure. If people swallow ricin poison, symptoms can start less than 10 hours after exposure. Death from ricin poisoning can take place in 36 to 72 hours of exposure.

Symptoms from **breathing in ricin** include:



Cough (may be bloody)



Difficulty breathing



Fever



Nausea

Symptoms from **swallowing ricin** include:



Abdominal pain



Nausea and Vomiting



Diarrhea (may be bloody)



Fever

You may have redness and pain if you get **ricin on your skin or in your eyes**. If you get ricin on your skin and then touch your face or mouth, you could swallow ricin.



If you think you got exposed to ricin, **seek emergency care right away.**

There is no specific treatment for ricin poisoning. Health care providers give supportive care to treat the symptoms.

Protect yourself from ricin poisoning



If you are in an area where someone released ricin:

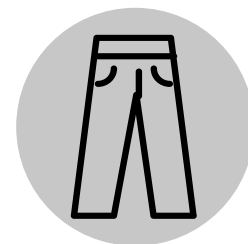
- If released outside, get away from the area.
- If released inside, get out of the building.
- Follow the directions of emergency coordinators on what to do next.

If you think you got exposed to ricin:



Remove your clothing. Take off clothing that may have ricin on it right away. Cut off any clothing that has to pull over the head.

Wash yourself. Wash any ricin off with large amounts of soap and water. If your eyes are burning, flush with plain water for 10 to 15 minutes. Remove contact lenses and do not put back into your eyes.



Dispose of your clothes. Place clothing in a plastic bag. Avoid touching contaminated areas of clothing. Seal the bag and put in another plastic bag and seal that. Dispose of the bag in a way that other people do not get exposed.

Seek medical attention right away.

For More Information, Visit:



emergency.cdc.gov/agent/ricin/index.asp

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.