



HYDROGEN FLUORIDE (HF)

What is HYDROGEN FLUORIDE?

Hydrogen fluoride is an industrial chemical and is considered a chemical warfare agent. Hydrogen fluoride is a naturally occurring and colorless gas that is very irritating to the skin, eyes, and lungs.

Signs and Symptoms:

Irritates and damages the skin, eyes, nose and airways. Other symptoms include difficulty breathing, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and irregular heartbeats, possibly leading to heart attack. Swallowing high levels can cause severe chemical imbalances in the body.

Exposure:

Inhalation, ingestion and absorption through the skin or eyes.

What can you do?

Emergency response leaders may direct people to evacuate or "shelter in place." If the hydrogen fluoride was released into the air, get fresh air by leaving the area where the chemical was released.

Treatment:

Rapid decontamination is critical due to rapid skin absorption. Certain medications can help lessen the effects of the chemical. The degree of pain is an indicator of whether the treatment is working. Supportive hospital care is often necessary.

Diagnosis:

Based on known or suspected exposure.

Whom do you call?

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

For more information:

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