



MUSTARD AGENTS

What is MUSTARD?

Mustard agents are also known as blister agents. Common names include sulfur mustard, lewisite, nitrogen mustard and mustard lewisite. Sulfur mustards are yellow to brown oily liquids with a slight garlic, onion or mustard odor. They may have no odor. Vapors can reach hazardous levels during warm weather. Mustard agents are considered chemical warfare agents.

Signs and Symptoms:

Depends on route and amount of exposure. Signs and symptoms include skin redness, itching and blistering, watering and swollen eyes, irritated nose and throat, possible toxic infection (sepsis), shortness of breath, and nausea and vomiting. Inhalation damages the lungs and airway and may cause death. Contact can cause permanent damage.

Exposure:

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

What can you do?

Emergency response leaders may direct people to evacuate or "shelter in place." If you are in an area where mustard was released, leave the area immediately and get to higher ground.

Treatment:

There is no specific treatment; therefore, it is best to avoid it. Remove contaminated clothing immediately and wash exposed skin/eyes. 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.