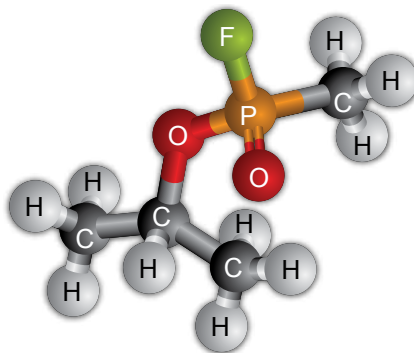# Sarin

Sarin is an extremely toxic substance whose sole application is as a nerve agent. As a chemical weapon, it is classified as a weapon of mass destruction by the United Nations according to UN Resolution 687, and its production and stockpiling was outlawed by the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993. Sarin can be used as a binary chemical weapon, meaning two different substances which are easier and/or safer to store independently can be mixed immediately prior to use to create the desired chemical.

Sarin is similar in structure and biological activity to some commonly used insecticides. At room temperature, sarin is a colorless, odorless liquid. Its vapor is also colorless and odorless. It has a relatively short shelf life, and will degrade after a period of several weeks to several months.

Timely decontamination is imperative. Contaminated equipment should be cleaned using household bleach, caustic soda, dilute alkali solutions, or hot, soapy water. When equipment is located in a confined area, steam and ammonia or hot, soapy water may be used. Sodium hydroxide, an all-purpose decontaminant, also works well on sarin.

Model of a Sarin molecule.

Method	Onset	Symptoms
Dermal exposure to liquid	Minutes to hours	**Mild Exposure:** Increased sweating at the site of exposure; muscular twitching at site **Moderate Exposure:** Same as above plus nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, generalized weakness **Severe Exposure:** Same as above plus loss of consciousness, convulsions, generalized twitching, flaccid paralysis, lapses in breathing, generalized secretions, involuntary defecation
Exposure to vapor	Seconds	**Mild Exposure:** Small pupils, runny nose, breathing constriction, secretions, slight lapses in breathing **Moderate Exposure:** Small pupils, runny nose, breathing constriction, secretions, marked lapses in breathing **Severe Exposure:** Same as above plus loss of consciousness, convulsions, generalized twitching, flaccid paralysis, lapses in breathing, generalized secretions, involuntary defecation