

VX

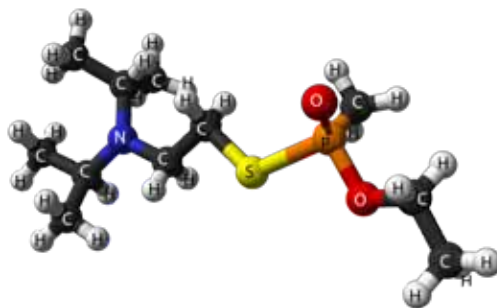
VX ($C_{11}H_{26}NO_2PS$), a chemical nerve agent, paralyzes the nervous system. It is more toxic and longer-lived than related nerve agents Tabun and Sarin, which dissipate quickly and have only short-term effects.

Symptoms

VX binds to an enzyme that transmits signals to the nerves and inhibits them. As a result, the nerves become isolated and uncontrollable.

Treatment

The antidote, atropine, is a toxin itself but counteracts VX by removing it from the enzyme. Atropine is normally injected into the arm or thigh; in the case of gas attacks, however, atropine must be injected directly into the heart. Full body protection and gas masks are essential to avoid exposure in a VX attack.



Model of a VX molecule.

Suspicious Substance?

- 1 Quickly get away
- 2 Protect yourself. Cover your mouth and nose with layers of fabric that can filter the air but still allow breathing. Examples include two to three layers of cotton such as a T-shirt, handkerchief or towel. Otherwise, several layers of tissue or paper towels may help
- 3 Wash with soap and water
- 4 Contact authorities
- 5 Watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the Internet for official news and information including what the signs and symptoms of the disease are, if medications or vaccinations are being distributed, and where you should seek medical attention if you become sick
- 6 If you become sick seek emergency medical attention

