

## **SOMAN FACT SHEET**

### **What is soman?**

Soman is a man-made warfare chemical, also known as a toxic nerve agent. Soman is a clear, colorless, tasteless liquid with a slight camphor odor (for example, Vicks Vapor Rub) or rotting fruit odor. Soman may become a vapor if heated. Soman was originally developed as an insecticide in Germany in 1944.

### **How can you be exposed to soman?**

You can be exposed by touching or drinking the water or by eating food that has been contaminated with soman. If soman is released into the air, you may be exposed through inhalation, skin or eye contact. If your clothes are exposed, they can continue to release the soman vapor for about 30 minutes, which may lead to exposure to other people.

### **How soon does an exposed person show symptoms?**

The symptoms will depend on the route, amount and length of time of exposure to soman. The timeline may range from less than 6 hours due to ingestion to 8 hours due to inhalation.

Symptoms will appear within seconds after exposure to the vapor form of soman, and within a few minutes to up to 18 hours after exposure to the liquid form.

### **What are the immediate symptoms?**

This toxic nerve agent causes an imbalance in the operation of the chemical that controls your body's "off switch" for glands and muscles. If exposed to a low or moderate amount of soman through inhaling, swallowing or skin absorption, you may have symptoms:

- runny nose
- teary eyes, small pinpoint pupils or blurred vision
- drooling
- confusion
- excessive sweating
- drowsiness
- coughing or chest tightness
- increased urination
- weakness,
- headache
- nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- slow or fast heart rate
- low or high blood pressure.

If exposed to a large dose of soman, you may have loss of consciousness, seizures, paralysis and problems breathing that may lead to death.

### **What are the long-term health effects?**

With low or moderate exposure, you can usually recover completely. Severely exposed people are not likely to survive.

### **What should you do if you think you have been exposed to soman?**

If you think you have been exposed, move quickly to an area where fresh air is available. Remove your clothing by cutting them off the body; if possible do not pull the clothes over your head. Quickly wash your entire body with large amounts of soap and water. If your eyes are burning or your vision is blurred, rinse them with plain water for 10 to 15 minutes. If you wear contacts, wash your hands after removing contaminated clothes and then remove the contacts before rinsing your eyes.

If you wear eye glasses, remove and wash them with soap and water. You can put your eyeglasses back on after you wash them. Place your contaminated clothes and contact lenses into a plastic bag and seal. Place the bag into a second plastic bag and seal. If soman has been ingested, do not drink fluids or induce vomiting. **Call 911 for medical attention right away and removal of the contaminated items. Do not drive yourself to the hospital as you may become very ill on your way.**

### **Where you can get more information on soman?**

[www.bt.cdc.gov](http://www.bt.cdc.gov)

[www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us)

[www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/rtkweb/rtkhsfs.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/rtkweb/rtkhsfs.htm)

### **Source of information**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)