

Handy Information for Exposures...

Information for Everyone

- If you are reading this you **will** be fine – see below for more specific information.
- You may be asked to bag your clothing or shower to prevent further spread of the chemical or powder. This is usual procedure for your comfort and protection while more information is gathered - it does **not** mean your exposure was dangerous.
- Being in these situations can be scary – some feelings, like being short of breath, sick to your stomach, having your heart race, and feeling trapped or anxious can be **normal** and may **not** be due to your exposure – since you are safe now, try to relax, once you feel in control if the feelings do not go away you may wish to see a doctor.
- You do **not** require evaluation at a hospital unless you are ill or injured.

Unknown Powder Exposures

- Powder exposures are common and are almost **always** harmless.
- Chemical powders may cause skin burning or coughing right away.
- People sometimes worry about getting anthrax from a powder exposure. We are not aware of any disease risk at this time. Public safety and public health personnel will investigate this incident. In the worst case, if there was an anthrax attack, antibiotics would be given to people who have been exposed to prevent them from getting sick (you don't need to start antibiotics now).
- If you were exposed please assure that the person who gave you this information has your name and contact phone number before you leave. Television news stations will broadcast any urgent information from the health department, so you may wish to watch the news in the next 6-12 hours.

Unknown Chemical Exposures

- If your clothing is given back to you, follow the washing directions given below.
- Chemical exposures usually cause effects immediately, so don't expect delayed problems. If you feel ill or have questions call the Minnesota Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222.

Riot Control Agent / Pepper Spray / 'Mace'

- Expect eye irritation, skin irritation, and perhaps coughing.
- These symptoms should be limited to less than an hour.
- Moving air (wind, fans) over your face / body will help you improve faster.
- Go to a hospital for any wheezing, skin blistering, or if you have more than 2 hours of eye pain or coughing.
- If you have questions call the Minnesota Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222.

Washing and Clothing

- If you have any skin irritation once you get home, take a gentle soap and warm water shower.
- If you were allowed to keep your clothing it may still have some of the substance on it. If you have a washer, wash the clothes in hot water with laundry soap. If your clothing is in a bag you may wish to let the washer fill with water first, then open the top of the bag **under the water** and put the clothes in (so that they go right into the water). You may receive special instructions for washing for certain powder exposures.
- If you do not have a washer available and your exposure was to a liquid (like 'mace' or pepper spray), you may wish to 'air out' your clothes outside for an hour or so – keep your face away from the bag as you open it to prevent inhaling the fumes.
- Do **not** shake out or air out powder from clothing – this clothing should be washed to clean it.
- Wash your hands after handling contaminated clothes.

Questions and Information

- For general information and questions about exposures and symptoms call the **Minnesota Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222.**

www.mnpoison.org

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