

helping victims breathe, giving them fluids intravenously (through a needle inserted into a vein), giving medications for seizures and low blood pressure, removing the toxin from their stomach with activated charcoal, or washing their eyes with water if their eyes are irritated.

Is ricin poisoning contagious?

No. Ricin poisoning is not spread from person to person.

Can ricin be “aerosolized” like anthrax?

Yes. Ricin can be processed into a fine powder and sprayed into the air.

Will the irradiation equipment used by the postal service have any effect on ricin?

The U.S. Postal Service’s equipment that radiates the mail may help destroy ricin. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still considers ricin to be just as dangerous even after irradiation.

If I have been around ricin, could I have carried it home?

- If someone released ricin into the air, ricin could settle on your clothing and might be carried into your home.
- It is unlikely that you could carry enough ricin into your home on your clothes or shoes to be poisonous.



**Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment**

What should I do if I am exposed to ricin?

- Leave the area where the ricin was released. If the ricin was released outdoors, move away from the area. If the ricin release was indoors, get out of the building.
- Emergency coordinators may tell you to either evacuate the area or to stay inside a building to avoid being exposed to the chemical.
- If you think you may have been exposed to ricin, remove your clothing, rapidly wash your entire body with soap and water, and get medical care as quickly as possible. Any clothing that has to be pulled over your head should be cut off instead of pulled over the head.
- If your eyes are burning or your vision is blurred, rinse your eyes with plain water for 10 to 15 minutes. If you wear contact lenses, remove them and put them with the contaminated clothing. Do not put the contacts back in your eyes, even if they are not disposable contacts. If you wear eyeglasses, wash them with soap and water. You can put your eyeglasses on after you wash them.
- If you are helping other people, avoid touching any contaminated areas.
- After washing, place your clothing inside a plastic bag. Avoid touching contaminated areas of the clothing. If you can’t avoid touching contaminated areas, or you aren’t sure where the contaminated areas are, wear rubber gloves, turn the bag inside out and use it to pick up the clothing, or put the clothing in the bag using tongs, tool handles, sticks, or similar objects. Anything that touches the contaminated clothing also should be placed in the bag. If you wear contacts, put them in the plastic bag, too.
- Seal the bag, and then seal that bag inside another plastic bag. Emergency personnel will arrange for disposal. Do not handle the plastic bags yourself.
- If someone has swallowed ricin, do NOT induce vomiting or give fluids to drink. Get medical attention right away.

Reliable sources of information

Colorado HELP hotline

www.cohelp.us
1-877-462-2911 (toll-free)
M-F 7 a.m. – 11 p.m.; S-S 9:30 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

www.cdphe.state.co.us
303-692-2700
1-800-866-7689 (toll-free)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/ricin/>
1-800-311-3435 (toll-free)
1-888-232-6348 (TTY)