



CASE DEFINITION

Interim document, 10-23-03

Ricin or Abrin Inhalation

Clinical description

Inhalation of ricin or of abrin, a closely related toxin, typically leads to cough and respiratory distress followed by pulmonary edema, respiratory failure, and multisystem organ failure. Weakness and influenza-like symptoms of fever, myalgia, and arthralgia may also be reported.

Laboratory criteria for diagnosis

- Detection of ricin or abrin in urine or plasma OR
- Detection of ricin or abrin in environmental samples

Case classification

Probable: a clinically compatible case with a high index of suspicion (reliable intelligence or patient history) for ricin or abrin exposure or with an epidemiological link to a laboratory-confirmed case

Confirmed: a clinically compatible case with laboratory confirmation

Note: A case should not be considered ricin or abrin poisoning if another confirmed diagnosis exists to explain the signs and symptoms.

This case definition is based on CDC's best current information.
It may be updated as new information becomes available.

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).

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Page 1 of 1