

Shelter-In-Place

One of the instructions you may be given is shelter-in-place. Shelter-in-place means that you need to take yourself, your family and pets indoors immediately. This is a precaution aimed to keep you and your family safe.

If gathering your family from outdoors, you can provide minimal protection to your breathing by covering your mouth and nose with a damp cloth.

Once indoors:

- Close all windows
- Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems
- Close the fireplace damper
- Go to an above-ground room (not the basement) with the fewest windows and doors.
- Jam wet towels in the crack under the doors. Tape around doors, windows, exhaust fans and vents.
- Use plastic garbage bags to cover windows, outlets and heat registers

Stay in the room and listen to your local news station until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate.

Stay Informed

If there is a known or suspected event, stay tuned to your local news station for ongoing information. You will be told by local experts what else to do to protect you and your family. The health department or emergency management agency will broadcast how to clean your clothes or how to dispose of them. If you were in the area of a criminal event, your bagged clothes may contain evidence. You may be instructed to take your clothes to a certain location so that they can be studied for clues.

Do not remove clothes from the sealed bags until you have been instructed by local officials.

Be Aware

If you develop symptoms of: **nausea, vomiting, dizziness, burning, fever, rashes, coughing, or difficulty breathing** go to your local hospital, urgent care, or family doctor **immediately**.

For more information, contact:

Columbus Health Department
(614) 645-7944 / (614) 645-6971
or
Central Ohio Poison Center
(614) 228-1323

Brought to you by:



Battelle
Central Ohio Poison Center
Central Ohio Trauma System (COTS)
Columbus Health Department
Columbus Medical Association
Franklin County Sheriff's Office
Norwich Township Division of
Fire/EMS, NAS-T Operations

Created 10/30/01

self **DECONTAMINATION**

You have just learned that you may have been contaminated with a chemical or germ that may make you sick. **Would you know how to decontaminate yourself in order to protect your life?**

A public service brochure brought to you by the Columbus Metropolitan Medical Response System

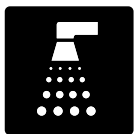
Decontamination

Decontamination means to remove harmful agents and germs from skin, clothing, and objects. These harmful agents, if left in place, could cause disease and possibly death. Every day people use decontamination to keep themselves healthy. Hand washing, bathing, laundering clothes, and cleaning living spaces are all ways to remove germs that cause disease. Some substances, such as certain biological, chemical and nuclear agents, are so dangerous that decontamination must occur immediately for a person to stay healthy.

This brochure is intended to teach the average citizen how to quickly decontaminate him/herself from a dangerous chemical, biological, or nuclear agent. The actions described in this brochure are not meant to take the place of a medical exam. Every person who believes that he might be a victim of a contaminating event should see a doctor for a check-up. Children, the elderly, and those people who are pregnant or have a chronic disease are especially at risk and should see a doctor as soon as possible.

Getting Clean

The fastest and most effective way to decontaminate a person is to take their clothes off. Removing clothes will reduce contamination from harmful agents and germs by 80%. The next step is to shower.



On-Site Decontamination

An accident or event may occur in a public place which causes a person to become contaminated with a dangerous chemical, biological, or nuclear agent. Firefighters and hospitals may use decontamination to get dangerous chemicals or germs off of people after certain kinds of accidents or explosions. Showers may be set up near the scene of the event by firefighters, or they may be set up at hospitals. Hospital showers for decontamination may be inside the hospital or they may be set up outside the actual hospital building. The fire fighters, police officers, and hospital workers who are at these showers will tell you where to go and what to do so that all of the dangerous agent can be washed off of your body. If a shower at the scene is not available or you are instructed to go to your home to shower off, do so immediately.

Leaving the Scene

If you are instructed to go home to shower off, the following actions should be done without delay. It is best to undress before going into your house. Carefully remove your clothes and place them in a large plastic trash bag. Tie the bag tightly, then seal this bag inside another bag. **Do not reopen the bags. Remember to remove necessary items from your pockets before sealing the bags (wallet, money, keys, etc.).** Put these smaller items in a smaller plastic bag separate from the clothes. Coats and purses should be bagged up with the clothes (bag and remove needed items from a purse just like from pockets).

Shower in hot or warm water. Using soap, make a thick lather all over your body and then rinse it off. Repeat this. Wash your hair twice with plenty of shampoo. You should be in the shower for at least three to five minutes.

Eye Care

If you wear contact lenses and your eyes are burning, wash your hands and remove the lenses immediately. Rinse your eyes with flowing water for fifteen minutes. You will need to seek medical treatment for further evaluation of your eyes. These contact lenses should be thrown away. If you wear contact lenses and your eyes are not burning, remove your contacts immediately after your shower and place them in a container of normal contact solution. Do not wear this pair of contact lenses until you have been advised by your doctor or the health department. Eyeglasses should be removed immediately and placed in the smaller bag with other valuable items.



Decontaminating Objects

Once showered and if you are having no symptoms, the smaller bag of items can be decontaminated. Wearing household rubber gloves, mix up a solution of one part bleach to nineteen parts water. Do not make the bleach solution too strong or it may burn your skin. Eyeglasses, money, wallets, credit cards, etc. can be dunked in the 1:20 bleach solution to clean them.

The 1:20 bleach solution can also be used to clean areas of the house that may have been contaminated as you came in and made your way to the shower. Doorknobs, counter tops, faucets, the shower walls, etc. can be cleaned with this solution. If you drove home from the scene, you may also want to consider decontaminating your car (door handles, steering wheel, seatbelt, gearshift, seat cushions, etc.).