



Ricin Toxin Backgrounder

Ricin is found in the seeds of the castor bean plant and is poisonous to animals and insects as well as humans. The toxin is very lethal and as little as one milligram can kill an adult. Ricin inhibits the creation of protein by inactivating the DNA sequencing process.

If death has not occurred in 3-5 days, the victim usually recovers. It is advisable to keep children away from the castor bean plant or necklaces made with the seeds. Castor bean plants in a garden are not recommended.

Ricin toxin can be delivered in several different routes. It can be used to poison the water or food supplies. Liquid or powdered ricin can be aerosolized and cause death of the lung tissues.

Ricin toxin is very easy to manufacture and the symptoms look like pneumonia making it a favorite of terrorists and assassins. Making ricin is very risky; People have died from getting the toxin on their skin.

In 1995 members of a Patriot organization were convicted of manufacturing ricin for the intent of killing law enforcement officers. Based on the amount of Ricin toxin the organization had more than 100 people could have been killed. Authorities arrested a man in 1993 trying to enter Alaska with weapons, racist literature and a quarter pound of ricin.