FACT SHEET – *Ricin*

**RICIN IS A POISON**

- Ricin poisoning is a deliberate act.
  - Ricin occurs naturally only in very small amounts.
  - Someone must work to get enough to poison people.
  - Accidentally getting poisoned is very unlikely.
- It can be a powder, pellet, mist, or liquid. It is made from the waste from making castor oil.
- It works by keeping the body from making proteins causing
  - cells to die
  - organs to stop working
  - death

**RICIN POISONING DOES NOT SPREAD FROM PERSON TO PERSON**

- Ricin can get into the body by
  - breathing it in
  - swallowing it
  - having it injected
- If ricin is breathed in, there will likely be
  - coughing, difficulty breathing, and nausea within a few hours
  - more difficulty breathing, and blue skin, within the next few hours
- If poisoning occurs by swallowing ricin, there could be
  - vomiting and bloody diarrhea within a few hours
  - seizures and blood in the urine

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services Frankfort, KY
http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/preparedness

Kentucky Regional Poison Center
Louisville, KY
EMERGENCY: 1-800-222-1222
Lake Cumberland District Health Dept.
(606) 678 – 4761

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Atlanta, GA
Toll free: 1-800-311-3435
http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/ricin
FACT SHEET – Ricin (continued)

DOCTORS TREAT THE SYMPTOMS OF RICIN POISONING

- People might receive such care as
  - help with breathing
  - medicines to reduce swelling
  - liquids to replace what is lost

- There is no
  - easy, widely-used test for ricin poisoning
  - vaccine to prevent poisoning
  - antidote to stop the effects

- If you are where ricin is released
  - get to fresh air or stay where the air is fresh
  - remove your clothing
  - wash all over with soap and water