

Chemical Categories used by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

Scientists often categorize hazardous chemicals by the type of chemical or by the effects a chemical would have on people exposed to it.

Biotoxins Poisons that come from plants or animals

Blister Agents/Vesicants Chemicals that severely blister the eyes, respiratory tract, and skin on contact

Blood Agents Poisons that affect the body by being absorbed into the blood

Caustics (Acids) Chemicals that burn or corrode people's skin, eyes, and mucus membranes (lining of the nose, mouth, throat, and lungs) on contact

Choking/Lung/Pulmonary Agents Chemicals that cause severe irritation or swelling of the respiratory tract (lining of the nose, throat, and lungs)

Incapacitating Agents Drugs that make people unable to think clearly or that cause an altered state of consciousness (possibly unconsciousness)

Long-Acting Anticoagulants Poisons that prevent blood from clotting properly, which can lead to uncontrolled bleeding

Metals Agents that consist of metallic poisons

Nerve Agents Highly poisonous chemicals that work by preventing the nervous system from working properly

Organic Solvents Agents that damage the tissues of living things by dissolving fats and oils

Riot Control Agents/Tear Gas Highly irritating agents normally used by law enforcement for crowd control or by individuals for protection (for example, mace)

Toxic Alcohols Poisonous alcohols that can damage the heart, kidneys, and nervous system

Vomiting Agents Chemicals that cause nausea and vomiting