



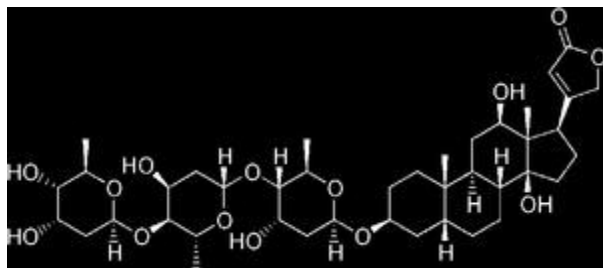
By Keith Veronese

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10 of the Most Dangerous Chemicals in the World

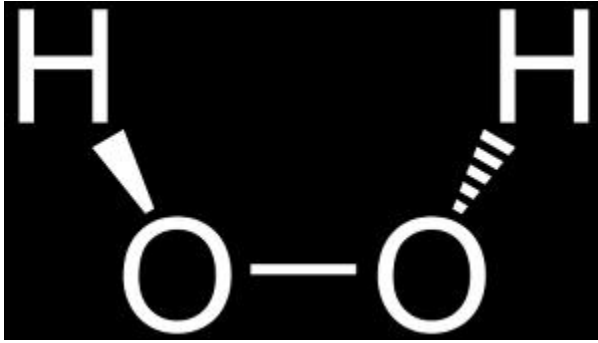
It's our chemical all-star team of death. We've got historic poisons that have claimed the lives of millions in a sinister manner, along with a couple of chemicals that might be in your home. Contact with any of these, in the right dose, will send you running for a hastily scribbled bucket list.

Before we start – a couple of rules concerning these deadly jumbles of carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen. Neither proteins (sorry Botulinum toxin) nor elements/radioactive isotopes (my apologies to Polonium-210) were considered for the list, with a nod given to chemical compounds that you could come in contact with during your life.



10. Digoxin

A [purified extract of the foxglove plant](#). In proper quantities, digoxin increases the efficiency of the heart. Charles Cullen, a nurse and the "angel of death", used pharmaceutical grade digoxin to [kill over forty patients](#) using the drug.



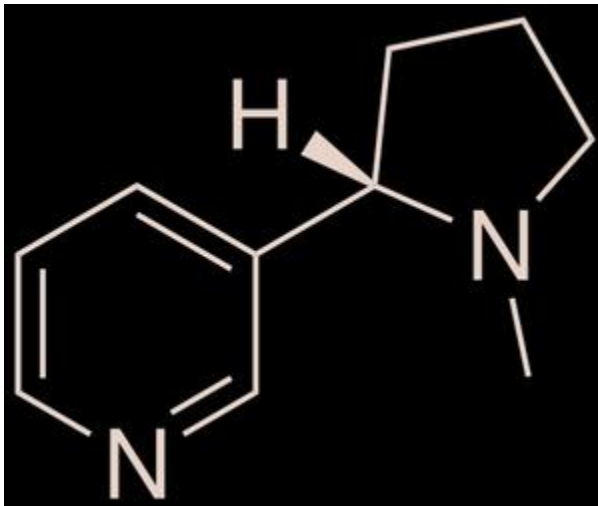
9. Hydrogen peroxide

The hydrogen peroxide in your bathroom cabinet has a concentration of 3 to 6%. At higher concentrations, it's a rocket propellant. Hydrogen peroxide is extremely volatile, with the merest nudge setting off an explosion in laboratory grade solutions (>70% hydrogen peroxide). The 2005 London subway bombers used concentrated hydrogen peroxide as an explosive in the attacks that killed 52 people.



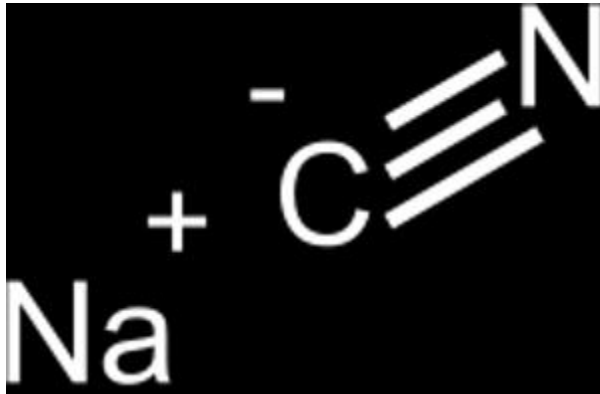
8. Ethylene glycol

It's in your car as antifreeze. It's cheap. It looks so damn simple. It has a moderate toxicity level, however, the sweet taste can make one easily surpass that boundary, leading the ethylene glycol to be metabolized into the more dangerous oxalic acid. Keep it away from animals and pets, as they are likely to lap up the liquid as a food source. If you do ingest a large amount of ethylene glycol, death is slow, knocking out organ systems systematically over the course of 72 hours. The treatment is administration of grain ethanol, as the ethanol competes with ethylene glycol for binding in your body.



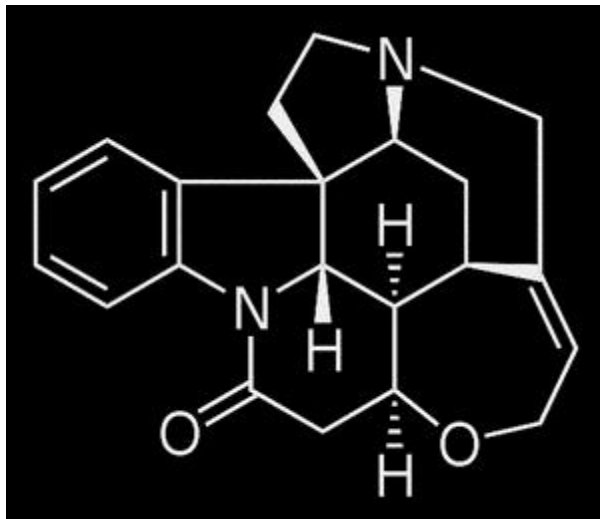
7. Nicotine

A member of the nightshade family of plants, this oily liquid that makes up between 0.6 to 3% of a cigarette's mass. Contact with the liquid pure form can cause death within hours, as nicotine passes through the dermis and heads directly for the bloodstream. Overdoses and death can easily occur in those smoking cigarettes with nicotine patches applied on their body.



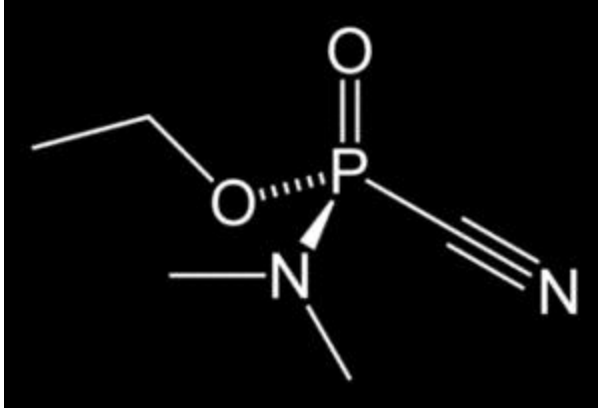
6. Sodium cyanide

A routine industrial reactant, but one false step results in the smell of almonds, then death within seconds. Cyanide binds to cytochrome c oxidase, a protein in the mitochondria, and stops the cells from using oxygen.



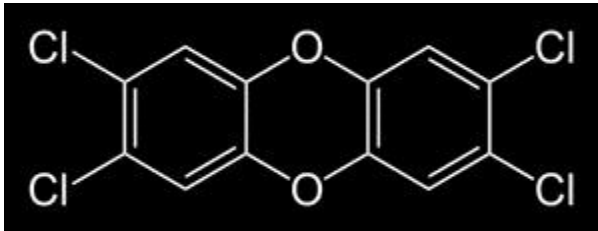
5. Strychnine

Commonly used as a pesticide to kill large unwanted pests like rodents and birds. Due to the ease of concealment, strychnine is rumored to have killed many historic figures including Alexander the Great and Blues musician Robert Johnson.



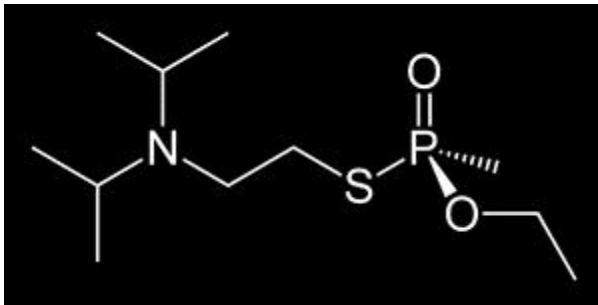
4. Tabun

One of the first nerve agents discovered, this liquid is known for a fruity odor and can be sprayed as a mist that causes convulsions and paralysis. Tabun itself is not extremely deadly, but the success of this chemical compound in war led to the development of deadlier toxins like ricin and soman. Iraqi soldiers used Tabun in the final days of the Iran/Iraq war to kill thousands of Iranians.



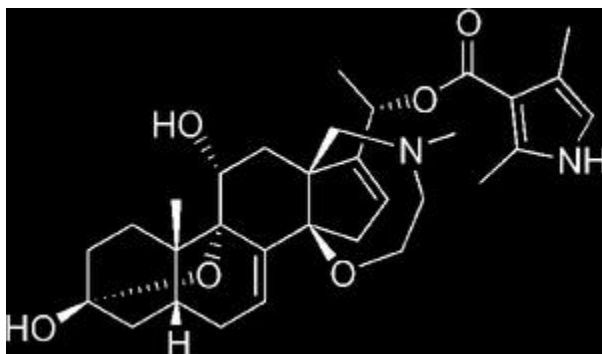
3. 2,3,7,8-Tetrachlorodibenzo-*p*-dioxin

Heard of Agent Orange? 2,3,7,8-Tetrachlorodibenzo-*p*-dioxin was the *contaminant* in Agent Orange. That's a bastard chemical. Agent Orange was created to cause defoliation of dense areas in Vietnam, but this contaminant led to severe prenatal deformities and skin lesions.



2. VX

One of the first chemical WMDs, researchers initially produced VX for retail sale in the 1950s as a pesticide. Thankfully, your likelihood of coming in contact with VX is extremely low - the world's stockpiles have been destroyed, including the United States' main stockpile in Anniston, AL.



1. Batrachotoxin

The most potent non-peptide based poison known. Batrachotoxin gained fame though its use in poison darts made from frog excretions. The frogs themselves don't produce the toxin directly, but through digestion of Melyrid beetles the frogs eat.

<http://io9.com/5861680/10-of-the-most-dangerous-chemicals-in-the-world/>