

Long-term Health Hazards Of Bearsprays

When we buy bearspray we have to sign paperwork because it is a restricted weapon.

There is increasing anecdotal evidence that it is especially dangerous to older people if inhaled.

As we reach an age where pneumonia becomes a greater concern we need to remember that not only does bearspray cause streaming eyes, it will produce copious amounts of fluid in the airways. Despite coughing, this may remain in the lungs leading to reduced oxygen uptake and infection. Undetected low blood oxygen levels may lead to cardiac damage if we “push through it”.

If you are exposed to bearspray, exhale immediately and cover nose and mouth with anything available. Get out of the chemical cloud as fast and far as possible without inhaling. Maintain shallowest breathing and thoroughly rinse mouth/throat before taking any deep breaths. Have your doctor monitor you for any signs of pneumonia, especially if you are unusually tired or have reduced stamina after exposure. You may save yourself months or years of reduced activity.

Geoff Williams is collecting information on older people who have suffered systemic effects of bearspray exposure. He would like to hear details of any cases known to members by email to web@canmoreseniors.org. If the brand of bearspray is known please include that in the information. Anonymity will be maintained.