# A screen shot of a computer  Description automatically generatedethylene oxide

Ethylene oxide (EtO) can be commonly found in the healthcare industry. It is a flammable gas that smells like ether when present in high concentrations. The chemical is regularly used for sterilizing surgical equipment. It is important for those that work with or around the chemical to be aware of the risks and know how to safely and use it.

*Effects of the Chemical:*

* Exposure can cause pain in the eyes and throat as well as issues with breathing and blurry vision.
* It can cause dizziness, nausea, headache, convulsions and visible blisters.
* Coughing and vomiting can be a result of exposure.
* It is a known carcinogen and has been linked to reproductive issues.
* EtO can cause paralysis, muscle weakness as well as impaired cognitive concerns.

*How to Protect Employees:*

* ****Know the permissible exposure limits and do not exceed them.
* Ensure all EtO is properly labeled with hazards clearly identified.
* Wear appropriate personal protective equipment when using EtO including safety goggles protective clothing to protect against splashing.
* Discard any clothing that has been contaminated with EtO.
* Report exposure to a supervisor immediately and seek medical attention.
* Employees should not eat, drink, apply cosmetics etc. while working around EtO.