Hydrogen Sulfide (H$_2$S) Health Hazards

Hydrogen sulfide is a colorless, flammable, extremely hazardous gas with a “rotten egg” smell. It is produced by the breakdown of animal wastes or manure. It is heavier than air and can collect in low-lying and enclosed, poorly ventilated areas such as reception pits, ditches, or manholes.

**What about longer term health effects?** Some people who breathed in levels of hydrogen sulfide high enough to become unconscious continue to have headaches and poor attention span, memory, and motor function after waking up. Problems with the cardiovascular system have also been reported at exposures above permissible exposure limits. People who have asthma may be more sensitive to hydrogen sulfide exposure. That is, they may have difficulty breathing at levels lower than people without asthma.


**For further information on Manure Gas Safety,** visit [http://fyi.uwex.edu/agsafety](http://fyi.uwex.edu/agsafety).

Information provided by UW-Madison/Extension Center for Agricultural Safety and Health, 460 Henry Mall, Madison WI 53706.