

## Family of Four Killed by Potatoes

In 2014, an eight-year-old girl found the bodies of her parents, brother and grandmother in a cellar after they were poisoned by gas from rotting potatoes. Eight-year-old Maria Chelysheva's family were killed one by one after entering a cellar where they stored potatoes for the winter. Relatives are now caring for the orphaned girl. The family lives in Laishevo, a town near Kazan in the Russian republic of Tatarstan.



Her father, Mikhail, 42, was the first to enter the cellar, not realising that the potatoes had become seriously rotten. He fainted from the noxious fumes, and soon afterwards died. When he failed to re-appear, his worried wife Anastasia, 38, went to look for him and was also overcome by the poisonous gas.

Next, the couple's 18-year-old son Georgy went in search of his parents, only to suffer the same tragic fate as his mother and father after inhaling the highly toxic fumes.

Anastasia's mother Iraida, 68, called a neighbour to say there was something suspicious and to ask for help. But before help arrived, she also went into the cellar, suffocated from the gas, and died, just like the others. It is understood that as she went in, she left the door open, allowing the fumes to disperse.

When Maria entered the cellar, she found the bodies of her whole family on the cellar floor.

"They all died of gas poisoning which had accumulated in the basement as a result of badly-rotting potatoes" said a local investigator.

Source:

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/08/14/girl-8-orphaned-after-gas-from-rotting-potatoes-killed-her-entire-family\\_n\\_7360976.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/08/14/girl-8-orphaned-after-gas-from-rotting-potatoes-killed-her-entire-family_n_7360976.html)

## **Toxic fumes from rotting potatoes**

As potatoes rot, especially in a closed or poorly-ventilated space like a cellar or cupboard, they produce gases such as solanine and other toxic alkaloids. These compounds can become concentrated enough to be dangerous.

As they decay, potatoes release gases like methane, ammonia, hydrogen sulphide and solanine, which can be irritating to the eyes and lungs.

Solanine is a natural toxin found in potatoes, especially green or sprouting ones. The fumes from a large amount of rotting potatoes can be harmful if inhaled in high concentrations.

Symptoms of exposure include headache, dizziness, breathing difficulties and nausea.

Safety tips:

- Always dispose of rotting potatoes quickly.
- Don't store potatoes in unventilated or warm areas.
- If you smell a foul odour or suspect the presence of gas, avoid entering the area before it is well-ventilated.