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## Poison Prevention: First Aid for Poisoning

Poisons can be swallowed or inhaled, or can enter your system through contact with the skin or with the eyes. There are basic first aid procedures for each of these types of exposure, which you may need to use while waiting for emergency assistance or for further instructions from a poison control center.

- Poison has been swallowed: Call a poison control center immediately for treatment advice. Remove anything remaining in the person's mouth. For chemicals or household products, have the person sip a glass of water if he or she is able to swallow. For medicines, don't give anything by mouth until you've gotten professional advice. Do not induce vomiting unless told to do so by a poison control center or doctor. Do not give anything by mouth to an unconscious person.
- Inhaled poison: Immediately get the person to a well-ventilated area or fresh air. Avoid breathing fume - remember that in this situation the rescuer may also be at risk. Check pulse and breathing. If the person is not breathing, call 911; then give artificial respiration, preferably mouth-to-mouth, if possible. If the person is breathing, call a poison control center for further treatment advice.
- Poison on the skin: Take off contaminated clothing. Rinse the skin immediately with plenty of water for 15-20 minutes. Remember to protect yourself from touching the poison. Call a poison control center for further treatment advice.
- Poison in the eyes: Gently hold the eyelids open with fingers and rinse the eyes with cool tap water for 15-20 minutes. If the person is wearing contact lenses, remove them after the first five minutes, then continue rinsing the eye. Do not let the person rub eyes. Call a poison control center for treatment advice.
- Who do you call?  
If you know or suspect a person has been exposed to a toxic substance, call the Minnesota Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222.
- For animal poisonings, call your vet or the Animal Poison Hotline at 1-888-232-8870. (There is a \$35 charge.)
- Stay calm. The person answering the phone at the poison center will ask many questions in order for the staff to determine what to do next. They may ask:
  - Symptoms and present condition of the victim.
  - The victim's name, age and weight.
  - The phone number you are calling from.
  - When did the poisoning occur?



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- What type of poison? Bring the container to the phone if possible.
- How much of the substance did the victim get? You might not know for sure. But estimate the MOST that could be missing. They would prefer you to overestimate than underestimate.
- Any first aid measures already performed.

**NOTE:** If the person is displaying obvious distress, such as breathing problems, hallucinations, convulsions, or loss of consciousness, call 911.

**Acknowledgments:**

[Environmental Protection Agency](#)

[Minnesota Poison Control Center](#)



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