

First Aid For Poisoning

General Guidelines

If you stay calm then the person you are helping will also stay calm.

Protect yourself from poisoning, especially if there is smoke, fumes, or a lot of chemical spilt.

Most poisons don't act immediately, take the time to get the correct advice before acting!

Check to see if the person is conscious by talking to them. If you don't get a reply, check that they are breathing and have a pulse.

If the person is unconscious, immediately call for an ambulance. If you know how, put the person into the recovery position or perform CPR as necessary.

If the person is conscious, call the National Poisons Centre immediately (**0800 POISON - 764 766**) so the correct first aid can be given.

Try to identify the chemical or drug involved, ideally bring the product container to the phone.

Good Advice

Lock away all medicines, household and garden chemicals, up high and out of reach of children.

Follow instructions on labels and use common sense at all times when using chemicals or medicines.

Always keep medicines and chemicals in their original containers.

Get rid of unwanted chemicals and medicines promptly, safely and correctly.

Know the plants and trees in your garden, and choose non toxic plants wherever possible.

Know the phone number for the Poisons Centre (**0800 POISON - 764 766**) and your own family doctor.

Learn how to do CPR (resuscitation).



National Poisons Centre

For Poisons Prevention Information

www.poisons.co.nz

For Poisons Advice

Telephone (24 hours a day)

0800 POISON

(0800 764 766)

National Poisons Centre

Dunedin School of Medicine

PO Box 913

Dunedin New Zealand

Email: poisons@otago.ac.nz



National Poisons Centre

Poisoning Prevention & First Aid



- About the National Poisons Centre
- How to use & store medicines and chemicals safely
- What to do in case of poisoning



INTRODUCTION

The National Poisons Centre is best known for the 24-hour emergency telephone service which it operates from Dunedin. This service provides information and advice to health care professionals and members of the public in cases of acute poisoning or accidents involving chemicals, either in the workplace or home. The staff at the Centre maintain a computer database on the health effects of the various chemicals, medicines, plants and animals.

POISONING PREVENTION

Storage

Store all medicines, household and garden chemicals in a locked cupboard, up high and out of reach of children.

Keep medicines, chemicals and cleaning products in their original container—Never combine different tablets or capsules in the same container.

Drinking glasses/bottles or other food containers should never be used for storage of chemicals. This is both very dangerous and illegal.

Ask for child resistant packaging when picking up your medicines from a pharmacist .

Contact your local regional council for information on safe disposal and return all unused and out-of-date drugs to your local pharmacist. It is not safe, or legal, to simply tip them down a drain or to put them into household rubbish.

Safe Use

Always read the label carefully—"Instructions for use" should be printed on the container. These instructions are important and should always be read before every use, even if you have used the product before.

If you are not sure about the instructions, check with your doctor (for medicines) or the manufacturer (for chemicals)

If protective clothing is advised for your personal safety, it should be used correctly.

Only use garden or agricultural sprays when there is no wind. When spraying you should also remember the safety of your family and neighbours.

Children should be encouraged to take their medicines without referring to them as lollies, sweets, or soft drinks. Be positive without associating them with food or drink.

Garden Plants

Children should be encouraged to enjoy the plants in the garden without eating them.

Keep plants which are poisonous out of reach of children.

Clear away berries, flowers and other plant material which fall onto lawns or garden paths so that children do not put them in their mouth.

Know the names of the plants in your garden, and your pot plants, so that the correct information can be given if it is needed.

Miscellaneous

If you have to burn any rubbish always do so in an open area, and be careful not to allow the smoke to blow towards your family or neighbours. Smoke may cause irritation to the throat and lungs. Some plant material can produce poisonous fumes if burned, e.g. oleander.

Treated wood (tanalised) and plastics are not safe to burn.

Old chemical containers or medicine packets, especially inhalers, should not be burned

FIRST AID FOR POISONING

In all cases of poisoning, contact the National Poisons Centre (0800 POISON - 764 766) or a doctor.

The poisoning (or first aid) advice on containers or packets may not be correct.

If A Poison is Swallowed

It is not advisable to make the person vomit. This may even be dangerous. Some household products, such as dishwashing liquids, may lead to vomiting.

Giving fluids to drink may not be helpful unless the poison is irritating e.g. household cleaner. If an irritating substance is swallowed immediately contact the Poisons Centre for further advice.

Children should not be put to bed or given anything to eat after swallowing any poison without first contacting the Poisons Centre or a doctor.



Splashes in the Eye

The eyes are very sensitive and are quickly damaged. Always begin flushing and then call the National Poisons Centre, a doctor or ambulance straight away

Flush the eye immediately with lots of water for at least 15 minutes, and sometimes longer. Use a glass or low pressure running water. Remove contact lenses while flushing .

Running water is best for flushing the eyes after exposure to any chemical or product. Do not use an eye bath or chemical such as Optrex.

Always allow the running water to run away from the nose to the ear so that the chemical is not flushed into the other eye. Carefully lift the eye lids so that the water can flush underneath.

After flushing, go to the nearest hospital or medical centre so the eye can be assessed

If corrosive products, e.g. acids or alkalis, are splashed in the eye, call an ambulance. Ambulance officers can assist with the flushing while traveling to the hospital.

Smoke, Fumes Or Gases

Protect yourself. Remove the person from the source as quickly as possible, making sure they can get plenty of fresh air.

If the person can not breath, call an ambulance.

Skin Exposure

Immediately flush the area with large amounts of water.

Remove any clothing and jewellery, unless there is burnt skin or the clothing is stuck to the skin.

If a large area is involved , call an ambulance while still flushing .

If a chemical spill has occurred, you may need to contact the fire service for assistance.

Insects and Animals

If you are bitten or stung, wash the bite with a mild soap and water.

Using an ice pack may be helpful in reducing pain and swelling.

If possible, keep the insect for positive identification

Jellyfish tentacles can be removed by flushing them with sea water or scrapping them off with a plastic card. Do not use vinegar.

Any wounds should be treated by a doctor, as foreign material may be present.

If any signs of allergy or infection develop (e.g. swelling, rash, difficulty breathing or swallowing) see a doctor asap.