

MUNI | SIMU
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First aid for poisoning

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Learning objectives

- Student will learn how to recognize and evaluate the severity of the condition of a patient affected by poisoning.
- Student will learn the procedure for providing first aid to a patient affected by poisoning.
- Student will learn when and how to contact the regional Poison Center.

General

- Injury or death due to swallowing, inhaling, touching or injecting various drugs, chemicals, venoms or gases.
- The effects of toxic substances are manifested at the point of entry and in distant organs according to the metabolism of the substance.
 - May cause severe damage to health to death.
- Children are also sensitive to small amounts of toxins.
- The most common cause of poisoning in paediatric patients is accidental poisoning.

When to suspect poisoning

- Poisoning signs can be different and often mimic other conditions, such as seizure, stroke, hypoglycaemia,..
- Symptoms of poisoning may include:
 - Vomiting
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Drowsiness
 - Confusion or other altered mental state
 - Burns or redness around the mouth
 - Breath that smells like chemicals (gasoline, paint thinner)
- Empty pill bottles or packages, stains and odours on the person or nearby objects can be seen in the vicinity.

Management

Recognize poisoning

- unconsciousness, altered mental state, convulsions, etc.
- In the vicinity of some empty blisters, letter, empty bottles

Assessment of severity

- Symptoms – consciousness, breathing, body colour, temperature,..
- Age of person, approximate weight, chronic diseases
- The type of substance that caused the poisoning – finding in the vicinity, odour, ..

Additional care

- Check consciousness and breathing – if breathing normally possible turn to the recovery position
- Call Emergency Service (155,112, 911, ..)
- Patient unconscious and not breathing – start CPR
- Possibility to contact regional poison control centre

When to call for help

Call local emergency number immediately

- Drowsy or unconscious
- Having difficulty breathing or has stopped breathing
- Uncontrollably agitated
- Having seizures
- Known to have taken medications intentionally or accidentally overdosed

Call regional poison control centre

- The person is stable and has no symptoms
- The person is going to be transported to the local emergency department

Regional poison control centre

- Be ready to describe the person's symptoms, age, weight, other medications and any information you have about the poison.
- Try to determine the amount ingested and how long since the person was exposed to it.
- If possible, have on hand the medication package or other suspect container so you can refer to its label.



What to do while waiting for help

Swallowed poison

- Remove anything remaining in the mouth.
- A household cleaner or other chemical, follow instructions on the label.

Poison on the skin

- Remove any contaminated clothing using gloves.
- Rinse the skin for 15 to 20 minutes in a shower or with a hose.

Poison in the eye

- Gently flush the eye with cool or lukewarm water for 20 minutes or until help arrives.

Inhaled poison

- Get the person into fresh air.

What to do while waiting for help

Vomiting

- If the person vomits, turn his or her head to the side to prevent choking.

CPR

- If the person shows no signs of life (unconscious, breathing).
- Be careful when breathing from mouth to mouth – some toxins are absorbed through the skin.

Call Poison Help

- If you need for additional instructions.

Gather pill bottles, packages or containers with labels

- Gather pill bottles, packages or containers with labels, and any other information about the poison to send along with the ambulance team.

Caution

Syrup of ipecac

- Don't give syrup of ipecac
- Don't do anything to induce vomiting

Button batteries

- Especially dangerous to small children
- Can cause severe burns in as little as 2 hours
- If you suspect that a child has swallowed one of these immediately take him to the hospital

Medicated patches

- Inspect skin if suspected
- Checking the oral cavity where it can be stuck

Source

- „Poisoning: First Aid“. Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-poisoning/basics/art-20056657>
- Co dělat při akutní otravě. <https://www.tis-cz.cz/index.php>

Learning outcomes

- Student is able to describe the symptoms of an intoxicated patient.
- Student is able to describe basic principles in first aid in an intoxicated patient.
- Student is able to describe what a toxicology information centre is, how to contact and what information he gets.

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