



First Aid for Poisoning

KEYWORDS

Poisoning, Venoms, Overdose, Insecticides, carbon mono oxide.

Mrs. ASHA CHRISTINA .A

TUTOR Sree Balaji College Of Nursing , Bharath University, Tamilnad , India

ABSTRACT *Poisoning is very dangerous to health. It may take the person to death. Poisoning is injury or death due to swallowing, inhaling, touching or injecting various drugs, chemicals, venoms or gases and its causes are medications, drug overdose, occupational exposure, cleaning detergents/paints, carbon mono oxide gas from furnace, heaters, insecticides etc. Signs and symptoms are mild and severe. Call for help when the patient is drowsy or unconscious, having difficulty breathing or has stopped breathing, uncontrollably restless or agitated, having seizure. Poisoning is a frightening experience, in which the client may die if not treated immediately. Patients require first aid to save their life. Find out if possible, the way the poison entered the body. This may either be through the mouth, nose, skin or eyes.*

INTRODUCTION

Poisoning is very dangerous to health. It may take the person to death, when not treated immediately. Poisoning is injury or death due to swallowing, inhaling, touching or injecting various drugs, chemicals, venoms or gases. Many substances — such as drugs and carbon monoxide — are poisonous only in higher concentrations or dosages. And others such as cleaners are dangerous only if ingested. Children are particularly sensitive to even small amounts of certain drugs and chemicals.

CAUSES

- Medications
- Drug overdose
- Occupational exposure
- Cleaning detergents/paints
- Carbon mono oxide gas from furnace, heaters
- Insecticides
- Certain cosmetics
- Certain household plants, animals
- Food poisoning (Botulism)

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POISONING MAY INCLUDE:

Symptoms of mild poisoning

- headache
- sweating
- diarrhoea
- irritation of nose and throat
- eye irritation
- nausea
- fatigue
- changes of mood
- skin irritation
- insomnia
- loss of appetite
- thirst
- weakness
- restlessness
- dizziness
- sore joints
- nervousness

Symptoms of severe poisoning

- vomiting
- convulsions

- loss of reflexes
- unconsciousness
- inability to breathe
- fever
- muscle twitching
- thirst
- constriction of eye pupils (eye pupils become small)
- increased rate of breathing

If you suspect poisoning, be alert for clues such as empty pill bottles or packages, scattered pills, and burns, stains and odors on the person or nearby objects. With a child, consider the possibility that he or she may have applied medicated patches or swallowed a button battery.

WHEN TO CALL FOR HELP

Call your local emergency number immediately if the person is:

- Drowsy or unconscious
- Having difficulty breathing or has stopped breathing
- Uncontrollably restless or agitated
- Having seizures

WHAT TO DO WHILE WAITING FOR HELP

Take the following actions until help arrives:

- Swallowed poison. Remove anything remaining in the person's mouth. If the suspected poison is a household cleaner or other chemical, read the container's label and follow instructions for accidental poisoning.
- 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 as soon as possible.
- If the person vomits, turn his or her head to the side to prevent choking.
- Begin CPR if the person shows no signs of life, such as moving, breathing or coughing.
- Have somebody gather pill bottles, packages or containers with labels, and any other information about the poison to send along with the ambulance team.

FIRST AID

If a person suffers from poisoning do the following im-

mediately:

- Find out if possible the way the poison entered the body. This may either be through the mouth, nose, skin or eyes.
- If the poison has been inhaled, move the person to fresh air.
- If the poison is in the person's eyes, quickly wash the eyes for 15 minutes with clean, gently running water. If there is no running water, bathe eyes from a container, frequently changing the water.
- If the poison is on the skin, remove all contaminated clothing and wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and water.
- If the patient is not breathing, apply artificial respiration if possible.
- Read the label on the pesticide container for any first aid instructions and keep the label for the doctor. It is very important to be able to tell the doctor the name of the pesticide.
- If the poison is swallowed, and only if the person is conscious, rinse the mouth with plenty of water and read the label on the pesticide container for further instructions.
- Quickly arrange for the doctor, or Community Nurse or Health Worker to be called or take the person to the doctor, clinic or hospital immediately.
- Keep the patient warm and comfortable.

STEPS TO AVOID

- Avoid giving an unconscious victim anything orally
- Do not induce vomiting unless told by a medical personnel
- Do not give any medication to the victim unless directed by a doctor
- Do not neutralize the poison with lime juice/honey

PREVENTION

- Store medicines, cleaning detergents, mosquito repellants and paints carefully
- Keep all potentially poisonous substances out of children's reach
- Label the poisons in your house
- Avoid keeping poisonous plants in or around house
- Take care while eating products such as berries, roots or mushrooms
- Teach children the need to exercise caution

CONCLUSION:

Poisoning is a frightening experience, in which the client may die if not treated immediately. Patients require first aid to save their life.

REFERENCE

1. David I. Goestesh, "Occupational Safety And Health" second edition, Prentice hall publisher. 2. T K Indrani, "first aid for nurses" publisher Jaypee. 3. Baswanthappa, (1999), "Community Health Nursing", 1st edition, Jaypee Publishers 4. L.G Gupta, Abhitabh, "Manual of first aid, management of general injury, sports injury and common alignment", jaypee publisher.