

HEALTH & FIRST AID

Poisoning & chemical exposure

Get substance-specific advice promptly. Treatments that help one exposure may worsen another.

Collapse, seizure, trouble breathing or inability to wake: call 911. Otherwise call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222.

Prevent an exposure

- Keep medicines, cleaners and chemicals in original labeled containers, away from children and anyone who may confuse them with food or drink.
- Follow labels for use, storage and protective equipment. Never mix cleaning products or put chemicals in beverage containers.
- Keep Poison Control's number available to caregivers. Check for accessible medicines, leaking containers and products stored together incorrectly.

Call with useful information

- Contact Poison Control promptly; do not wait for symptoms. Have the product container nearby if you can obtain it safely.
- Describe age, substance, possible amount, time, exposure route and symptoms. Follow the specialist's instructions.
- Do not induce vomiting or give home remedies, activated charcoal, food or drink unless specifically directed.

Protect yourself while helping

- Do not enter unknown fumes or attempt a rescue in a contaminated space. Leave and call emergency services.
- For inhaled exposure, move to fresh air only without entering the hazard. Tell dispatch if anyone remains inside.
- For skin or eye contact, begin rinsing as advised by the label or Poison Control. Remove contaminated clothing without exposing yourself.

After the immediate response

- Keep product information for clinicians. Do not handle leaking packages or transport hazardous material to hospital unless responders direct you.
- Arrange safe cleanup through the appropriate authority. Keep others and pets away until the area is cleared.
- Review storage and caregiver instructions afterward. An apparently small exposure deserves expert advice because risk depends on the substance and person.

Sources & further guidance

[Poison Control - poisoning first aid](http://www.poison.org) | www.poison.org

[MedlinePlus - poisoning first aid](http://medlineplus.gov) | medlineplus.gov