



Queensland Poisons Information Centre

Poisoning first aid

If someone has collapsed or is not breathing, always ring **000** first. Only ring the Poisons Information Centre once the ambulance is on the way.

Immediate first aid is very important in a poisoning emergency.

WHAT TO DO

If someone has **swallowed** a poison

- Do NOT try to make the person vomit.
- Wipe or rinse the mouth and face.
- **Call 13 11 26**

If someone has poison on their **skin**

- Remove the contaminated clothing, taking care to avoid contact with the poison.
- Flood the skin with cool running water.
- Wash gently with soap and water then rinse well.
- **Call 13 11 26**

If someone has poison in their **eye(s)**

- Gently flood the eye with water from a cup, jug or slowly running tap. Continue for 10-15 minutes, holding the eyelids open.
- **Call 13 11 26**

If someone has **inhaled** poison

- Move the person to fresh air quickly if safe to do so. Avoid breathing any fumes.
- Open doors and windows.
- **Call 13 11 26**

If you think someone has been poisoned call the **Poisons Information Centre** on **13 11 26** immediately. Do not wait for symptoms to occur.

IMPORTANT: If it is safe to do so, it helps to have the container with you when you call the Poisons Information Centre. You may be asked for the name and any ingredients.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POISONING

Common signs and symptoms to look for include:

- burns, redness or blisters around the mouth and lips, from drinking certain poisons.
- breath that smells like chemicals, such as petrol or paint thinner.
- burns, stains and odours on the person or their clothing, or on furniture, floor, rugs or other objects in the surrounding area.
- empty medication bottles or evidence of pills in the area.
- vomiting, difficulty breathing, sleepiness, confusion or other unusual signs.

FOR FAST POISONING ADVICE



13 11 26

24 hours a day,
anywhere in Australia

Calls to the Queensland Poisons Information Centre are answered by pharmacists specially trained in toxicology and the provision of poisons information. Centre staff can provide first aid advice and determine whether medical attention is needed, as well as offer poisoning prevention information.

Poisoning prevention

STORAGE

- Store all medicines and chemicals out of reach and out of sight of children (at least 1.5m high), in a locked or child-resistant cupboard.
- Keep poisons in their original containers. Never transfer poison to drink or food containers.
- Always store medicines separately from household products.
- Only buy household products and medicines in child-resistant packaging. Check that the child-resistant closure is working correctly. You may need to clean around the neck of the container.
- Do not leave medications such as the contraceptive pill on a bedside table.
- Place empty bottles of medicine or cleaning products into an outside bin immediately – many poisonings occur when children access containers from the kitchen rubbish bin.

MEDICINES

- Always read and follow the directions for use.
- Always take medicines in a well lit room. Wear your glasses.
- Do not take other people's medicines.
- Children tend to imitate adults, so avoid taking medicines in their presence.
- Refer to medicines by their proper names. They are not lollies.
- Visitor's bags may contain medicines. Store them out of reach of children.
- Keep medicines that require refrigeration in a tightly closed or locked container at the back of the fridge.
- Clean out your medicine cupboard regularly. Take unwanted or out-of-date medicines to your nearest pharmacy for disposal.

OTHER RISKS AROUND THE HOME

- Always follow instructions when using chemicals and cleaning products. For example, when painting, spraying weeds or cleaning the oven, protect your skin, eyes and airways. Ensure there is good air circulation.
- Button batteries can cause life-threatening injuries if swallowed. Check the battery compartments on devices and toys are secure, and lock away spare batteries.

Poisons can include:

- prescription medicines
 - over-the-counter medicines such as iron tablets and paracetamol
 - natural or alternative remedies
 - essential oils such as eucalyptus and tea tree oil
 - cleaning and laundry products
 - button batteries
 - kerosene, mineral turpentine, petrol
 - perfumes and aftershaves
 - tobacco, cigarettes, cigarette butts and nicotine replacement therapy products
 - pesticides, weed killers
 - paints
 - some plants and mushrooms
 - bites or stings by spiders, snakes, jellyfish etc.
- Supervise children when using toys or devices containing button batteries. **If you suspect a child has swallowed a battery, go to the nearest hospital immediately.** Do not let the child eat or drink. Do not induce vomiting.
 - Be aware of the plants in your garden and remove any that are known to be poisonous. Look out for mushrooms and other fungi, especially after rain. If someone is exposed to a poisonous plant, follow the advice in this fact sheet and collect a sample (if safe to do so) for possible later identification.

SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER...

- The risk of poisoning increases when usual daily routines are disrupted. For example, when moving house, going on holiday, having visitors or household illnesses.
- Many poisonings occur when a product or medicine is not in its usual location. For example, when in use and left on a bench top or bedside table, or during transport from the shop to home.
- Take extra care to supervise children when visiting other households and businesses – they may not have medicines or other poisons stored safely.