

First Aid: Poisoning



Call 911

Call 911 if any of these are true:

- You see a sick or unconscious person (especially a child) with an open container of pills, chemicals, illegal drugs or paraphernalia, or plant-life and herbs.
- The room or the person's breath smells of fumes.
- The person has burns in or near the mouth.
- The person has shallow puncture wounds, which may be a venomous snakebite (often on the lower arm or leg).

Swallowed poisons

Step 1. Call Poison Control

- Call the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.
- If there is no Poison Control Center in your area, call 911. Or ask the operator to connect you to emergency services.
- Don't make the person vomit or give ipecac syrup.

Step 2. Follow instructions

- Care for the person as instructed by Poison Control.
- Keep the person as calm as possible.
- If the person needs medical help, bring the container or the poison with them to the hospital.

Poisonous bites

Step 1. Reduce circulation

- Keep the person still with the injured area below their heart level. This slows the spread of poison to the body.
- Remove any rings, watches, or constrictive clothing from the area surrounding the bite.
- Don't use a tourniquet.
- Don't apply ice.
- Don't cut the bite.
- Don't try to suck venom out with your mouth.

Step 2. Call 911 or get medical help

- Do CPR if there is no pulse or breathing.
- If you are in an area where a poisonous snakebite is possible, wear protective boots and clothing. Extractor kits don't work and are not advised.

Details to know

For the best response when calling Poison Control, know as much of this information as possible:

- The label on the medicine bottle or chemical container, or the name or description of the plant
- The amount swallowed
- How much time since the poisoning
- The person's age, weight, and symptoms
- The travel time to the nearest emergency room

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