



[Home](#) → [Medical Encyclopedia](#) → Cold wave lotion poisoning

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Cold wave lotion poisoning

Cold wave lotion is a hair care product used to create permanent waves ("a perm"). Cold wave lotion poisoning occurs from swallowing, breathing in, or touching the lotion.

This article is for information only. DO NOT use it to treat or manage an actual poison exposure. If you or someone you are with has an exposure, call the local emergency number (such as 911), or the local poison control center can be reached directly by calling the national toll-free Poison Help hotline (1-800-222-1222) from anywhere in the United States.

Poisonous Ingredient

Thioglycolates are the poisonous ingredients in these lotions.

Where Found

Thioglycolates are found in:

- Hair perm (permanent) kits
- Various cold wave lotions

Other products may also contain cold wave lotion.

Symptoms

Below are symptoms of cold wave lotion poisoning in different parts of the body.

EYES, EARS, NOSE, AND THROAT

- Mouth irritation
- Burning and redness of the eyes
- Possibly serious damage (such as ulcers, erosions, and deep burns) to the cornea of the eyes

HEART AND BLOOD

- Weakness due to low blood sugar

LUNGS AND AIRWAYS

- Shortness of breath

NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Drowsiness
- Headache
- Seizures (convulsions)

SKIN

- Bluish-colored lips and fingers
- Rash (red or blistered skin)

STOMACH AND INTESTINES

- Cramping
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting

Home Care

Seek medical help right away. Do not make the person throw up unless poison control or a health care provider tells you to. If the chemical is on the skin or in the eyes, flush with lots of water for at least 15 minutes.

If the chemical was swallowed, give the person water or milk right away, if a provider tells you to do so. Do not give anything to drink if the person has symptoms that make it hard to swallow. These include vomiting, convulsions, or a decreased level of alertness. If the person breathed in the poison, move them to fresh air right away.

Before Calling Emergency

Have this information ready:

- Person's age, weight, and condition
- Name of the product (ingredients and strength, if known)
- Time it was swallowed
- Amount swallowed

Poison Control

Your local poison control center can be reached directly by calling the national toll-free Poison Help hotline (1-800-222-1222) from anywhere in the United States. This national hotline number will let you talk to experts in poisoning. They will give you further instructions.

This is a free and confidential service. All local poison control centers in the United States use this national number. You should call if you have any questions about poisoning or poison prevention. It does NOT need to be an emergency. You can call for any reason, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

What to Expect at the Emergency Room

Take the container with you to the hospital, if possible.

The provider will measure and monitor the person's vital signs, including temperature, pulse, breathing rate, and blood pressure. Symptoms will be treated.

The person may receive:

- Activated charcoal
- Blood and urine tests
- Breathing support, including tube through the mouth into the lungs and breathing machine (ventilator)
- Chest x-ray
- ECG (electrocardiogram, or heart tracing)
- Endoscopy (camera placed down the throat to see burns in the esophagus and the stomach)
- Fluids through a vein (by IV)
- Laxative
- Surgery to remove burned skin (debridement)
- Washing of the skin (irrigation), perhaps every few hours for several days

Outlook (Prognosis)

How well someone does depends on the amount of poison swallowed or otherwise exposed to and how quickly treatment is received. The faster medical help is given, the better the chance for recovery.

Skin problems will clear up when use of the product is stopped. If the lotion is swallowed, recovery normally occurs if the right treatment is received in time.

Most home permanent kits that contain cold wave lotions are watered down to avoid poisoning. However, some hair salons may use stronger forms that need to be diluted before use. Exposure to this stronger cold wave lotion will cause much more damage than the ones used at home.

Alternative Names

Thioglycolate poisoning

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