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Caladium plant poisoning

This article describes poisoning caused by eating parts of the Caladium plant and other plants in the Araceae family.

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 your local emergency number (such as 911), or 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.

Poisonous Ingredient

The poisonous ingredients are:

- Calcium oxalate crystals
- Asparagine, a protein building block (amino acid) found in the plant

Note: All parts of the plants are poisonous if large amounts are eaten.

Where Found

Caladium and related plants are used as houseplants and in gardens.

Symptoms

Symptoms from eating parts of the plant or from the plant touching the eye include:

- Burning in the mouth or throat
- Damage to the outer clear layer (cornea) of the eye
- Diarrhea
- Eye pain
- Hoarse voice and difficulty speaking
- Increased salivation
- Nausea or vomiting
- Swelling and blistering in the mouth or tongue

Blistering and swelling in the mouth may be severe enough to prevent normal speaking and swallowing.

Home Care

If the plant was eaten, wipe out the mouth with a cold, wet cloth, and give the person milk to drink. Call poison control for more treatment information.

If the eyes or skin touched the plant, rinse them well with water.

Before Calling Emergency

Have this information ready:

- The person's age, weight, and condition
- Name of the plant and parts eaten
- Amount swallowed
- The time it was 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 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 plant with you to the hospital, if possible.

The health care 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:

- Airway and breathing support for severe mouth and throat swelling
- Additional eye flushing or washing
- Intravenous fluids (IV, through a vein)
- Medicines to treat symptoms

Outlook (Prognosis)

People who do not have a lot of mouth contact with the plant are usually fine within a few days. People who have more mouth contact with the plant may take longer to recover. Serious burns to the cornea may require specialized eye care.

Alternative Names

Alocasia plant poisoning; Angel wings plant poisoning; Colocasia plant poisoning; Heart of Jesus plant poisoning; Texas Wonder plant poisoning

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