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Campho-Phenique overdose

Campho-Phenique is an over-the-counter medicine used to treat cold sores and insect bites.

Campho-Phenique overdose occurs when someone applies more than the normal or recommended amount of this medicine or takes it by mouth. This can be by accident or on purpose. Inhaling a large amount of Campho-Phenique fumes may also cause symptoms.

This article is for information only. DO NOT use it to treat or manage an actual overdose. If you or someone you are with has an overdose, 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

Campho-Phenique contains both camphor and phenol.

For information on products containing camphor alone, see camphor overdose.

Where Found

Both camphor and phenol are in Campho-Phenique. However, camphor and phenol may be found separately in other products.

Symptoms

Below are symptoms of a Campho-Phenique overdose in different parts of the body.

AIRWAYS AND LUNGS

- Irregular breathing

BLADDER AND KIDNEYS

- Little or no urine output

EYES, EARS, NOSE, AND THROAT

- Burning in the mouth or throat

HEART AND BLOOD VESSELS

- Collapse (shock)
- Low blood pressure
- Rapid pulse

NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Agitation
- Coma (lack of responsiveness)
- Convulsions (seizures)
- Dizziness
- Hallucinations
- Muscle stiffness or uncontrolled muscle movements
- Stupor (confusion and mental slowness)
- Twitching facial muscles

SKIN

- Bluish-colored lips and fingernails
- Skin redness (from applying too much to the skin)
- Sweating (extreme)
- Yellow skin

STOMACH AND INTESTINES

- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Excessive thirst
- Nausea and 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. For skin irritation or contact with the eyes, flush the area with cool water for 15 minutes.

Before Calling Emergency

Have this information ready:

- The person's age, weight, and condition
- The name of the product (ingredients and strength, if known)
- When it was swallowed
- The 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 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.

Your provider will measure and monitor your vital signs, including temperature, pulse, breathing rate, and blood pressure. Symptoms will be treated.

Tests may include:

- Blood and urine tests
- Chest x-ray
- CT scan (advanced imaging) of the brain for neurologic symptoms
- Electrocardiogram (ECG)

Treatment may include:

- Fluids through a vein (IV)
- Laxatives
- Medicine to treat symptoms
- Skin and eye irritation may be treated with cool water irrigation and antibiotic cream, ointment, or eyedrops
- Breathing support, including oxygen, tube through the mouth into the lungs, and breathing machine (ventilator)

Outlook (Prognosis)

Survival past 48 hours often means the person will recover. Seizures and irregular heartbeat may start suddenly, within minutes of exposure, and pose the greatest risk to health and recovery.

Keep all medicines in child-proof containers and out of the reach of children.

References

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