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## Furniture polish poisoning

Furniture polish poisoning occurs when someone swallows or breathes in (inhales) liquid furniture polish. Some furniture polishes may also be sprayed into the eyes.

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

Poisonous ingredients include hydrocarbons (such as waxes, oils, organic solvents).

### Where Found

This ingredient is found in various liquid furniture polishes.

### Symptoms

Furniture polish poisoning can cause symptoms in many parts of the body. Symptoms depend on how the poisoning occurred, and how much of the poison was involved.

Swallowing such poison may cause:

- Agitation
- Confusion
- Coma (decreased level of consciousness and lack of responsiveness)
- Dizziness
- Breathing difficulty
- Low blood pressure that develops rapidly
- Severe pain in the throat, mouth area, nose, eyes, or ears
- Severe stomach pain
- Throat swelling
- Vomiting, possibly bloody

- Blood in your stools

If the poison touched your skin or eyes you may have:

- Skin burns and irritation
- Vision loss

If the poison is breathed in (inhaled or aspirated), the following can occur:

- Blurred vision
- Breathing problems -- difficulty breathing or no breathing
- Collapsed lung (pneumothorax)
- Coma (lack of responsiveness)
- Confusion
- Coordination problems
- Dizziness
- Fever
- Fluid around the lung
- Headache
- Inflammation of the lungs
- Infection of the lungs (secondary pneumonia)
- Low blood pressure or shock
- Lung bleeding
- Convulsions (seizures)
- Sleepiness
- Stupor (decreased awareness, sleepiness, confusion)

## Home Care

Seek medical help right away. Do not make a person throw up unless told to do so by poison control or a health care professional.

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, immediately give the person water or milk, unless instructed otherwise by a health care provider. Do not give water or milk if the person is having symptoms (such as vomiting, convulsions, or a decreased level of alertness) that make it hard to swallow.

If the person breathed in the poison, immediately move the person to fresh air.

## Before Calling Emergency

Get the following information:

- Person's age, weight, and condition
- Name of the product (and ingredients and strengths, 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 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

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

- Blood and urine tests
- Breathing support, including oxygen through a tube into the lungs, and a breathing machine (ventilator)
- Bronchoscopy -- camera down the throat to look for burns in the airways and lungs (if the poison was inhaled)
- Chest x-ray
- Electrocardiogram (ECG)
- Endoscopy -- camera down the throat to look for burns in the esophagus and the stomach
- Fluids through a vein (by IV)
- Medicine to reverse the effect of the poison and treat symptoms
- Surgical removal of burned skin (skin debridement)
- Tube through the mouth into the stomach to aspirate (suck out) the stomach. This is done only when the person gets medical care within 30 to 45 minutes of the poisoning, and a very large amount of the substance has been swallowed
- Washing of the skin (irrigation) -- perhaps every few hours for several days

## Outlook (Prognosis)

How well the person does depends on the amount of poison swallowed and how quickly treatment is received. The faster the person gets medical help, the better the chance for recovery.

Swallowing such poisons can have severe effects on many parts of the body. Burns in the airway or gastrointestinal tract can lead to tissue death. This may result in infection, shock, and death, even several months after substance was swallowed. Scar tissue in the affected areas can lead to long-term problems with breathing, swallowing, and digestion.

# References

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