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Castor oil overdose

Castor oil is a yellowish liquid often used as a lubricant and in laxatives. This article discusses poisoning from swallowing a large amount (overdose) of castor oil.

This is for information only and not for use in the treatment or management of an actual overdose. If you have an overdose, you should call your 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.

Ricinus communis (castor oil plant) contain the toxin ricin. Seeds or beans swallowed whole with the hard outer shell intact typically prevent absorption of significant toxin. Purified ricin derived from the castor bean is highly toxic and lethal in small doses.

Poisonous Ingredient

Large amounts of castor oil can be poisonous.

Where Found

Castor oil comes from the seeds of the castor oil plant. It can be found in these products:

- Castor oil
- Alphamul
- Emulsoil
- Fleet Flavored Castor Oil
- Laxopol
- Unisol

Other products may also contain castor oil.

Symptoms

Symptoms of a castor oil overdose include:

- Abdominal cramps
- Chest pain

- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Hallucinations (rare)
- Fainting
- Nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Skin rash
- Throat tightness

Home Care

Castor oil is not considered very toxic, but allergic reactions are possible. Call the poison control center for treatment information.

Before Calling Emergency

Have this information ready:

- Person's age, weight, and condition
- Name of product (as well as the 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. 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 health care provider will measure and monitor the person's vital signs, including temperature, pulse, breathing rate, and blood pressure. The person may receive:

- Blood and urine tests
- ECG (electrocardiogram or heart tracing)
- Intravenous fluids (through a vein)
- Medicine to treat symptoms

Outlook (Prognosis)

Normally, castor oil should cause few problems. Recovery is very likely.

If nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea are not controlled, serious dehydration and electrolyte (body chemical and mineral) imbalances may occur. These can cause heart rhythm disturbances.

Keep all chemicals, cleaners, and industrial products in their original containers and marked as poison, and out of the reach of children. This will reduce the risk for poisoning and overdose.

Alternative Names

Alphamul overdose; Emulsoil overdose; Laxopol overdose; Unisol overdose

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