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## **Chlorophyll poisoning**

Chlorophyll is the chemical that makes plants green. Chlorophyll poisoning occurs when someone swallows a large amount of this substance.

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**

Chlorophyll can be harmful in large amounts.

### **Where Found**

Chlorophyll can be found in:

- Green plants
- Plant foods
- Some cosmetics
- Natural supplements

Other products may also contain chlorophyll.

### **Symptoms**

Chlorophyll is considered nonpoisonous. Most people who swallow chlorophyll have no symptoms. In rare cases, the following symptoms may occur:

- Diarrhea
- Loose bowel movements (stools)
- Stomach cramps

If someone does swallow chlorophyll, their tongue may appear yellow or black, and their urine or stool may appear green. If chlorophyll touches the skin, it may lead to mild burning or itching.

# **Home Care**

Do not make a person throw up unless poison control or a health care provider tells you to.

## **Before Calling Emergency**

Have this information ready:

- Person's age, weight, and condition
- Name of the substance
- 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.

The person may not need to go to the emergency room, but if they do go, they may receive:

- Activated charcoal
- Medicines to treat symptoms
- Laxatives

## **Outlook (Prognosis)**

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

Recovery is very likely because chlorophyll is relatively nonpoisonous.

## **References**

Pizzorno JE, Crinnion WJ. Environmental medicine. In: Pizzorno JE, Murray MT, eds. *Textbook of Natural Medicine*. 54th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2021:chap 35.

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