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Hair spray poisoning

Hair spray poisoning occurs when someone breathes in (inhales) hair spray or sprays it down their throat or into their 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 the 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.

Poisonous Ingredient

The harmful ingredients in hair spray are:

- Carboxymethylcellulose
- Denatured alcohol
- Hydrofluorocarbon
- Polyvinyl alcohol
- Propylene glycol
- Polyvinylpyrrolidone

Where Found

Various hair sprays contain these ingredients.

Symptoms

Symptoms of hair spray poisoning include:

- Abdominal pain
- Blurred vision
- Breathing difficulty
- Burning pain in the throat
- Burns to the eye, redness, tearing
- Collapse

- Coma (decreased level of consciousness and lack of responsiveness)
- Diarrhea (watery, bloody)
- Low blood pressure
- Inability to walk normally
- No urine output
- Rash
- Slurred speech
- Stupor (decreased level of consciousness)
- Vomiting

Home Care

Seek medical help right away.

Move the person to fresh air right away.

Before Calling Emergency

Have this information ready:

- Person's age, weight, and condition
- Name of the product (ingredients, if known)
- Time it was inhaled
- 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.

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:

- Blood and urine tests
- Breathing support, including a tube through the mouth into the lungs, and a breathing machine (ventilator)

- Chest x-ray
- ECG (electrocardiogram, or heart tracing)
- Fluids through a vein (by IV)
- Medicines to treat an allergic reaction and other symptoms
- Surgery to remove burned skin (debridement)
- Washing of the skin or eyes (irrigation)

If the poisoning is severe, the person may be admitted to the hospital.

Outlook (Prognosis)

Hair spray is not very toxic. Most hair spray poisonings are not serious.

How well someone does depends on how severe the poisoning is and how quickly they receive treatment. The faster medical help is given, the better the chance for recovery.

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Review Date 11/2/2023

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06/01/2028

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