

Poisons – Toxicology

*** CME Version ***

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Poisons -- basics

- Poison
 - Any substance that can harm the body
- Toxin
 - Any substance that is poisonous
- Four types of poison:
 - Ingested
 - Inhaled
 - Absorbed
 - injected



Ingested

- Swallowed items
- Bleach
- Medications
- ...



Inhaled

- Gas
- Vapors
- Sprays
- ...



Absorbed

- Corrosives
- Insecticides
 - **Organophosphates**
- Agricultural
- ...



Injected

- Venom
- Illicit drugs
- ...



Poisons -- General Approach

- Identify the substance
- Estimate the amount of product ingested
- Estimate the duration of exposure
- **Take the product container to the hospital**



Unconscious/AMS patient

- ABCs
 - Suction PRN
 - O₂
- Ongoing assessment
- Transport immediately



Conscious patient – Ingested Poison

- ABCs
 - O_2
- **Contact medical control for instructions on treatment**
- Transport



Conscious patient – Inhaled poison

- **Ensure your own safety**
- **Remove patient to fresh air**
- ABCs
 - O₂
- Ongoing assessment
 - Monitor for swollen airway
 - What S/S would you expect?
- Transport



Conscious patient – skin/eyes

- **Ensure your own safety**
- ABCs, O₂ PRN
- Liquid chemical?
 - Flush with water for > 20 minutes
- Dry powder?
 - **Brush off any remaining chemical**
 - Flush with water for > 20 minutes
- Eyes?
 - Irrigate eyes with saline or water for > 20 minutes
 - **Do not contaminate “good” eye**
 - Cover both eyes with moist dressings
- Transport



Substance abuse

- Alcohol or illicit substances
- S/S
 - Odor on person or clothing
 - Unsteady gait
 - Slurred speech, incoherent
 - Poor coordination
 - Hallucinations, blackouts, AMS



Withdrawal

- Delirium Tremens ("DT")
 - Serious and potentially fatal condition
- S/S
 - Confusion, restlessness
 - Unusual behavior/hallucinations
 - Gross tremors → seizures
 - Profuse diaphoresis



Substance abuse

- Uppers
 - Stimulants
- Downers
 - Depressants
- Narcotics
 - Capable of producing stupor or sleep
- Hallucinogens
 - Mind altering
- Volatile chemicals