

You can call the Poisons Information Line 24 hours a day from anywhere in Australia on 13 11 26

Poisoning

Poisoning is when a person is exposed to a substance that can damage their health or put their life in danger. Most cases of poisoning happen at home.

Children under 5 years of age have the highest risk of accidental poisoning, so make sure poisonous substances including medicines and household cleaning products are locked away out of the sight and reach of your children.

What causes poisoning?

The most common way a person becomes poisoned is by swallowing (ingesting) a harmful substance, although you can also be poisoned by:

- inhaling a harmful substance
- injecting a harmful substance
- splashing a harmful substance onto skin or into eyes or mouth
- being bitten or stung by an insect, animal, snake or spider.

Poisoning symptoms

The symptoms of poisoning will depend on the type of poison, the amount taken, the age and size of the person and their general health. But in general things to look out for include:

- * feeling sick
- * diarrhoea
- * drowsiness
- * weakness
- * chills (shivering)
- * headache
- * difficulty swallowing
- * skin rash
- * double or blurred vision
- * coma
- * vomiting
- * stomach pain
- * dizziness
- * high temperature above 38 degrees
- * loss of appetite
- * irritability
- * more saliva than normal
- * burns around mouth or nose
- * seizures

When to seek medical help

If you suspect that someone has taken an overdose or has been poisoned do not try to treat them yourself. Get medical help immediately.

If the person is showing signs of being seriously ill, such as vomiting, loss of consciousness, drowsiness or seizures (fits), call triple zero (000) for an ambulance, or take the person to the closest emergency department.