



# First Aid for Poisoning & Overdoses



**Autumn Semester 2023-2024**

Course Name : **Basic Emergency Life Support**

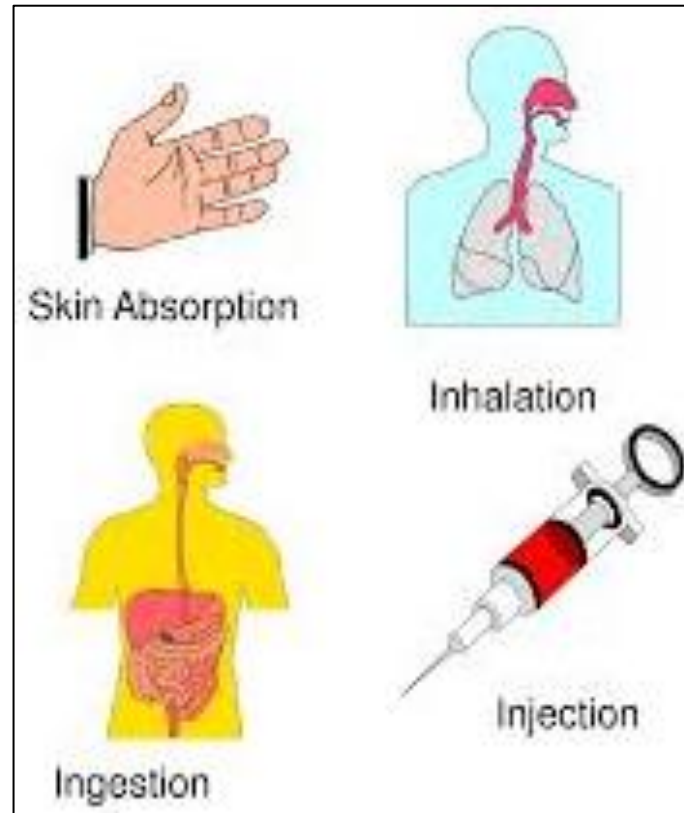
Stage : 2 Lecture 5: first aid for Poisoning & Overdoses

Lecture: Dr. Soma Majedi

**Poisoning** is a process of

- ✓ Inhalation
- ✓ Ingestion
- ✓ Absorption
- ✓ Injection

of a poisonous substance.



What Grandparents  
Need to Know about

## ACCIDENTAL POISONING



Poisoning may be **accidental** or **intentional** and can occur from many different forms such as:



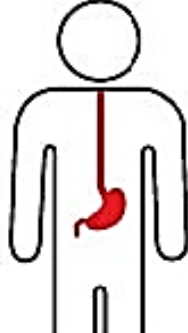

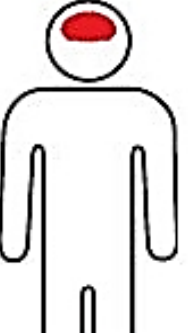
**Chemicals, Alcohol, Drugs, Plants, Household items**

# Caused by

- ✓ Toxic fumes
- ✓ Toxic substances
- ✓ Bites and stings

## Signs and symptoms

- ✓ Delirium, unconsciousness.
- ✓ Burns to skin, lips and throat
- ✓ Irritation to eyes and skin.
- ✓ Respiratory distress, such as slow breathing or airway blockage.
- ✓ Affected heart function.
- ✓ Intoxication.
- ✓ Stroke.

				
SKIN	RESPIRATORY	GASTROINTESTINAL	CARDIOVASCULAR	NEUROLOGICAL
hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness	coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain or tightness, throat tightness, trouble swallowing, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms, (sneezing or runny or itchy nose; red, itchy or watery eyes)	nausea, stomach pain or cramps, vomiting, diarrhea	dizziness/ lightheadedness, pale/blue colour, weak pulse, fainting, shock, loss of consciousness	anxiety, feeling of "impending doom" (feeling that something really bad is about to happen), headache  <hr/> <b>OTHER</b> <hr/> uterine cramps

# Symptoms



Symptoms vary according to the poison, but may include:

- ✓ Abdominal pain
- ✓ Bluish lips (cyanosis)
- ✓ Chest pain
- ✓ Confusion
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ Diarrhea
- ✓ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ✓ Dizziness
- ✓ Double or Blurred vision
- ✓ Drowsiness
- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Headache
- ✓ Heart palpitations
- ✓ Irritability
- ✓ Loss of appetite
- ✓ Loss of bladder control
- ✓ Muscle twitching
- ✓ Nausea and vomiting
- ✓ Numbness and tingling
- ✓ Seizures
- ✓ Skin rash or burns
- ✓ Stupor
- ✓ Unconsciousness  
(coma)
- ✓ Unusual breath odor
- ✓ Weakness

# What to do



## Inhaled Poisons

- **Move** casualty and yourself to **fresh air**.
- **Loosen** tight clothing.

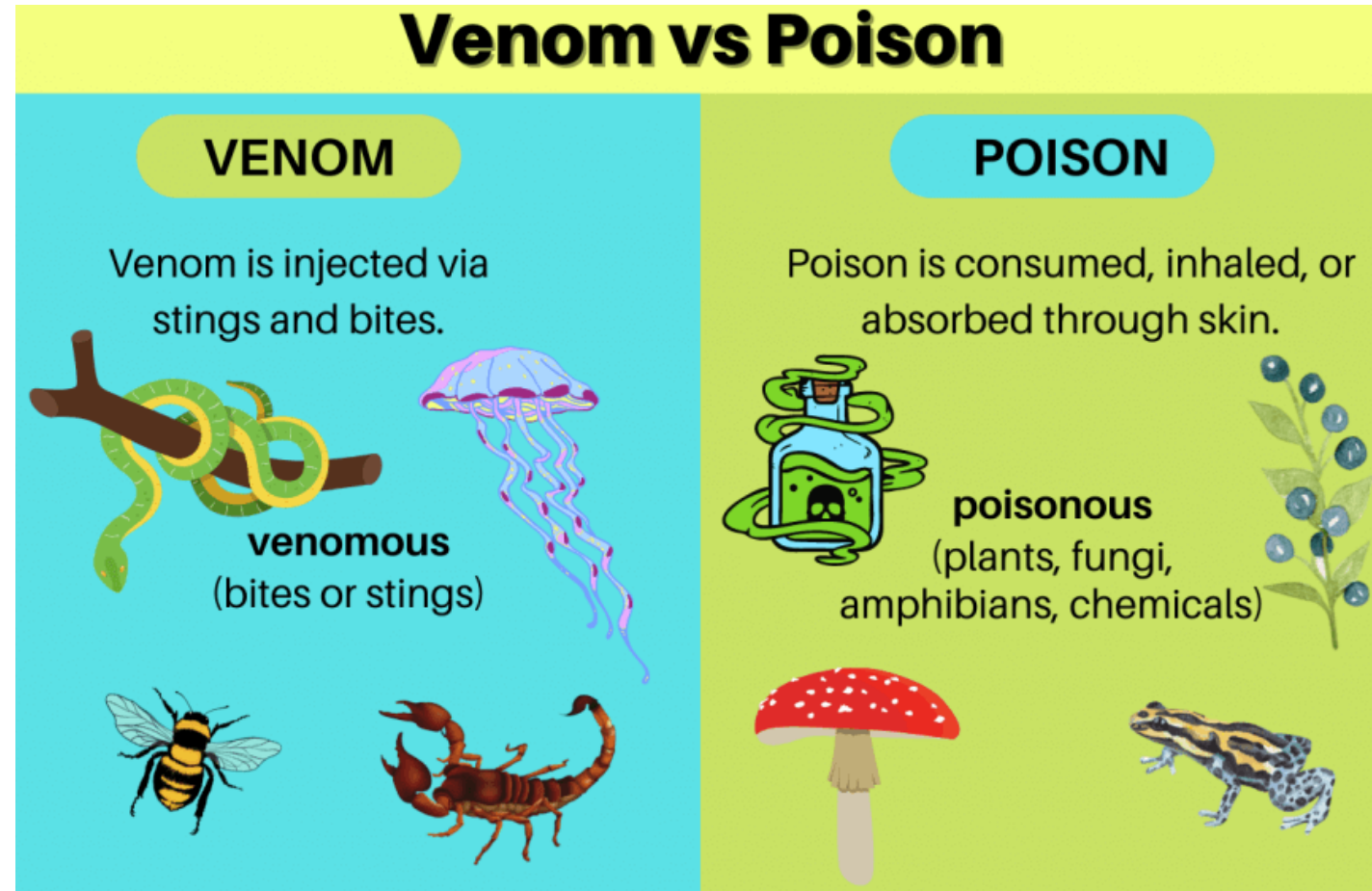
## Absorbed Poisons

- **Protect** yourself (if possible) use protective clothing such as **gloves, goggles, and so on**.
- **Wash** the substance off immediately.
- Ask the casualty to **remove** any contaminated clothing.
- **Flush** the casualty's skin with **running water**.
- **Wash** gently with soap and water and rinse well.

# What to do

## Injected

- Follow **DRSABCD** action plan.
- Avoid **needle stick injuries** to yourself and casualty.
- **Treat** any other signs and symptoms.
- **Send** any empty **syringes, bottles, and vials** with the casualty to the hospital.




# What to do


- Follow **DRSABCD** action plan.
- **Urgent medical aid** is required. **Call** for an **ambulance**.
- **Call Poisons Information** and/or follow **instructions on any containers**.
- **Send any vomit, containers, or notes** with the casualty to the **hospital**.



If ingested, **DO NOT** induce vomiting.



Children may be given 6-8 raw egg whites.



If there is dermal exposure, bathe the patient using alkaline soap.



Bring the child immediately to the nearest hospital.



## Conscious casualty

- **Listen** to the casualty and **give** reassurance.
- **Find out** what sort of poison is involved and **keep** any containers for the medical aid to see.
- **DO NOT induce** vomiting or give anything to eat or drink.
- **Wash** any corrosive substance off the mouth and face with water or wipe off.

## Unconscious casualty

- **Place** the casualty in the **recovery position** if unconscious and breathing and continue to **check** their **airway** and **breathing** regularly.



# What not to do



- ⊘ Give an **unconscious** person anything by **mouth**.
- ⊘ **Induce vomiting** unless you are told to do so by the Poison Control Center or a doctor. A **strong poison** that **burns** on the way down the throat will also do damage on the way back up.
- ⊘ Try to **neutralize** the poison with **lemon juice** or **vinegar**, or any other substance, unless you are told to do so by the Poison Control Center or a doctor.
- ⊘ Use any "**cure-all**" type antidote.
- ⊘ **Wait** for symptoms to **develop** if you suspect that someone has been poisoned.



# What to do if you suspect someone has overdosed?



1. Follow the standard First Aid Response – **DRSABCD**
2. Call 122 and ask for an ambulance.
3. If the casualty is **unconscious**, place them carefully on their **SIDE** and check their **airway, breathing** and **pulse**.
4. **Follow** the **advice** of the 122 operator. They are trained to help over the phone until the ambulance arrives, so stay calm, listen to them and advise of any changes to the patient as they occur.



# What to do if you suspect someone has overdosed?



5. Begin **CPR** if necessary and you can do so (Sometimes dangers to you might exist that prevent you from doing CPR, such as aggressive bystanders who might also be under the effects of a drug).
6. If **breathing** and **pulse** are **normal**, maintain the unconscious person carefully on their **SIDE** and **continue** to **monitor** breathing and pulse. Do not try to induce vomiting.
7. Try to **establish** which **drug** was taken and send any containers, tablets or syringes to the hospital with the casualty. Also **send** a sample of vomit, in a covered jar.

# First aid treatment for a suspected overdose



It's vitally important that before you do anything, you must ensure your own safety.

1. Follow the standard first aid response – **DRSABCD**

2. Call **000** and ask for an ambulance.

3. If unconscious

If the casualty is unconscious, place them carefully on their SIDE and check their airway, breathing and pulse.

4. Follow the advice of the 000 operator

They are trained to help over the phone until the ambulance arrives, so stay calm, listen to them and advise of any changes to the patient as they occur.

5. Begin CPR

Begin CPR if necessary and you are able to do so – sometimes dangers to you might exist that prevent you from doing CPR, such as aggressive bystanders who might also be under the effects of a drug.

6. If breathing and pulse are normal

Maintain the unconscious person carefully on their SIDE and continue to monitor breathing and pulse. Do not try to induce vomiting.

7. Try to establish which drug was taken

Try to establish which drug was taken and send any containers, tablets or syringes to the hospital with the casualty. Also send a sample of vomit, in a covered jar



## References

- ✓ <https://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/what-you-can-do#:~:text=First%20steps&text=If%20the%20person%20inhaled%20poison,for%2015%20to%2020%20minutes.>
- ✓ <https://vitalfirstaid.com.au/news/what-to-do-if-someone-has-an-overdose/#:~:text=If%20breathing%20and%20pulse%20are%20normal%2C%20maintain%20the%20unconscious%20person,the%20hospital%20with%20the%20casualty.>