

## **Chapter 6. Part 3. Poisoning and Overdose**

## **Chapter 6: Handling Medical Emergencies**

## Part 3: Poisoning and Overdose

(Recognizing and managing accidental or intentional exposure to toxic substances)

## What Is Poisoning?

Poisoning occurs when a harmful substance enters the body and interferes with its normal function. This can happen by:

- Ingestion swallowing (e.g., household cleaners, spoiled food, drugs)
- Inhalation breathing toxic fumes (e.g., carbon monoxide, gas leaks)
- Injection via needle or bite/sting (e.g., drugs, venom)
- **Absorption** through skin or eyes (e.g., pesticides, chemicals)

# 2. Types of Poisoning and Their Signs

## A. Chemical Poisoning (Household or Industrial)

Examples: bleach, toilet cleaner, insecticides, acids

#### Signs:

- Burns around mouth/lips
- Vomiting, abdominal pain
- Breathing difficulty (if inhaled)
- Altered consciousness

### **B. Food Poisoning**

Causes: contaminated food or water

### Signs:

- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea
- Abdominal cramps
- Fever, weakness
- Dehydration (dry mouth, low urine)

## C. Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Cause: inhaling fumes from faulty heaters, vehicles in closed spaces

Signs:

<sup>©</sup> Ayurvite Wellness Pvt Ltd. All rights reserved. This PDF is for personal use only Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or commercial use is strictly prohibited.



- Headache, dizziness
- Confusion, blurred vision
- Cherry-red skin (in later stages)
- Loss of consciousness

### **D. Drug or Medication Overdose**

Causes: excessive prescription drugs, recreational drugs, self-harm

#### Signs:

- Slow or no breathing
- Drowsiness or coma
- Small or enlarged pupils
- Seizures
- Abnormal heart rate

# 3. General First Aid for Poisoning

First Rule: Never induce vomiting unless advised by a medical professional or poison control center.

### A. Steps to Follow:

- 1. **Check safety** make sure the area is safe for you.
- 2. Call emergency services (112) immediately.
- 3. Try to identify the poison:
  - o Check bottles, labels, pills, or smell.
  - o If possible, take a sample to the hospital.
- 4. Check the person's response:
  - o Are they awake?
  - Are they breathing?
  - o Any seizures?

## **B. If Poison Was Swallowed (Ingested)**

- Do NOT give water, milk, or anything by mouth unless instructed.
- Do NOT induce vomiting.
- Place the person on their side if drowsy or vomiting (recovery position).
- Save vomit sample for hospital analysis.

#### C. If Poison Was Inhaled

- Move the person to fresh air immediately.
- Loosen tight clothing.
- Watch for breathing; start CPR if needed.
- Avoid breathing in the fumes yourself.

<sup>©</sup> Ayurvite Wellness Pvt Ltd. All rights reserved. This PDF is for personal use only Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or commercial use is strictly prohibited.



#### D. If Poison Was on Skin or Eyes

- · Remove contaminated clothing carefully.
- Rinse skin or eyes with clean running water for 15-20 minutes.
- Use gloves to avoid spreading it to yourself.

# 4. First Aid for Drug Overdose

Overdose can be accidental (e.g., double dose) or intentional (self-harm or substance abuse)

#### A. What to Look For:

- Opioids (e.g., heroin, morphine): slow breathing, pinpoint pupils, unresponsive
- Stimulants (e.g., cocaine): agitation, high pulse, seizures
- Sedatives (e.g., sleeping pills): drowsy, unconscious, slow breathing
- Alcohol overdose: vomiting, confusion, slow pulse, cold skin

#### **B. First Aid Steps for Overdose:**

- 1. Call 112 immediately
- 2. Check breathing and pulse
  - If absent → start CPR
- 3. Place in recovery position if unconscious but breathing
- 4. Do not leave the person alone
- 5. Do not give anything by mouth
- 6. Look for containers, pill bottles—hand them to medical team

If trained and **naloxone (Narcan)** is available (for opioids), administer it as per local laws and instructions.

## Important "Do NOTs"

□ Do	not give v	vater or foo	d to unco	nscious vi	ctims	
□ Do	not try to	neutralise	acids or a	ılkalis with	other su	bstances
П Do	not delay	in calling f	or profess	ional help		

☐ Do not assume the person is asleep—act fast

# 6. Prevention Tips

- Keep all medicines and chemicals **locked away** from children.
- Label containers clearly—never store chemicals in food bottles.
- Never share prescription medications.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors at home.

<sup>©</sup> Ayurvite Wellness Pvt Ltd. All rights reserved. This PDF is for personal use only. Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or commercial use is strictly prohibited.



# 7. Self-Check Questions

- 1. What is the most important first step in any poisoning emergency?
- 2. Name two signs of opioid overdose.
- 3. Should you induce vomiting in chemical poisoning?
- 4. What position is safest for an unconscious person who is breathing?
- 5. Which type of poisoning is associated with small pupils and slow breathing?
- 1. Call emergency services (112)
- 2. Pinpoint pupils, slow breathing, unconsciousness
- 3. No never induce vomiting unless told to
- 4. Recovery position (on the side)
- 5. Opioid overdose

# ☐ Key Take-Home Points

- Poisoning can enter the body through mouth, nose, skin, or injection.
- Identify, do not guess—the type of poison determines the treatment.
- Always **call emergency services first**, then provide safe and appropriate care.
- Never give anything orally to an unconscious person or try home remedies.
- When in doubt, protect the airway and keep the person safe until help arrives.

<sup>©</sup> Ayurvite Wellness Pvt Ltd. All rights reserved. This PDF is for personal use only Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or commercial use is strictly prohibited.