

Poisoning First Aid | American Red Cross

Poison Precautions and Prevention

More than 2 million poisonings are reported each year across the country. The Red Cross urges people to follow these steps to help prevent, treat and respond to poisoning:

1. If you suspect a poisoning emergency, call the National Poison Control Center toll-free at (800) 222-1222. Post this and other emergency phone numbers by all of your telephones.
2. Keep all chemicals and medicines locked up and out of sight.
3. Be careful when handling substances, chemicals and cleaners that could be harmful. Only use them in well-ventilated areas and wear protective clothing, such as gloves and a face mask.
4. Use common sense with your own medications.
5. Keep medications in the containers they came in. Make sure they are kept out of children's reach.
6. Read the product information carefully. Use only as directed.
7. Be aware of the possible side effects and any possible interactions with other medications you are taking. Ask your health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions.
8. Never use another person's prescribed medications or medications that have expired.

Poisons can be swallowed, inhaled, absorbed or injected

If you suspect a poisoning:

1. Check the scene and the person. Try to find out what poison was taken. Look for any containers and take them with you to the phone.
2. Call the National Poison Control Center at (800) 222-1222 and follow their instructions.
3. Care for any life threatening conditions found. DO NOT give the person anything to eat or drink unless directed to do so by the National Poison Control Center or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

1. Install a carbon monoxide alarm in the hallways near sleeping areas, avoiding corners where air does not circulate, and follow the manufacturer's instructions to test the alarm every month.
2. Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning: headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, sleepiness, and confusion. If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, get outside to fresh air immediately, and then call 9-1-1.