

NICOTINE POISONING

Nicotine is a bitter-tasting compound that naturally occurs in the leaves of tobacco plants. It is a very addictive and toxic substance. Nicotine can be swallowed, inhaled, and absorbed through the skin. Nicotine poisoning results from having too much nicotine in the body and can cause seizures and death.

WHERE IS NICOTINE FOUND?

- Chewing tobacco
- Cigarettes
- Nicotine gum
- Nicotine patches
- Tobacco leaves
- E-liquid (used for electronic nicotine delivery systems)
- Some insecticides

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF NICOTINE POISONING

Nicotine poisoning typically produces toxicity in two phases: stimulation/excitation (early) followed quickly by inhibition/depression (late). Some may only exhibit late phase effects. Onset of physical effects is dependent on route of exposure. Vomiting is the most common symptom of nicotine poisoning. The duration of symptoms is about 1 to 2 hours following mild exposure, and up to 18 to 24 hours following severe exposure. Death may occur within 1 hour after severe exposure.

Early Phase Symptoms (15 minutes to 1 hour)

- Nausea/Vomiting
- Agitation/Restlessness
- Confusion
- Rapid breathing
- Rapid heart rate
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Increase salivation (drooling)
- Visual or hearing distortions, and burning sensation in the mouth.

Late Phase Symptoms (30 minutes to 4 hours)

- Diarrhea
- Shallow breathing
- Low blood pressure
- Lethargy
- Depression
- Weakness
- Paralysis
- Coma

IF YOU SUSPECT NICOTINE POISONING

- Seek medical help immediately by calling 911 or a local poison control center at **1-800-222-1222**.
- DO NOT make a person throw up unless told to do so by Poison Control or a health care professional.
- Determine the patient's age, weight, and condition.
- Try to find the name of the product (including the ingredients and strength if known), when the product was swallowed or inhaled, and the amount swallowed or inhaled.
- If the chemical is on the skin, wash with soap and lots of water for at least 15 minutes.

If you have any questions about nicotine poisoning or suspect a patient may have nicotine poisoning call the Washington Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Source: "Nicotine Poisoning." Medline Plus. 30 April. 2015.