



# Poison HOTLINE

1-800-222-1222

June 2022



*Did you know .....*

**Poison Hemlock belongs to the same plant family as carrots, parsnips, fennel and dill.** It is found across Iowa. Poison hemlock contains the toxic alkaloid coniine which disrupts the central nervous system. All parts of the plant are toxic to humans and animals. Poison hemlock has a white root and the stems are smooth, hollow, and have purple spots.

Coniine has a structure like nicotine first causing stimulation followed by CNS depression and paralysis of respiratory muscles. Skin contact may cause dermatitis.

Call **1-800-222-1222** for treatment recommendations for any poison hemlock exposure.

## The Venomous Snakes of Iowa

The State of Iowa is home to four venomous snakes – all of which are in the subfamily of pit vipers. The prairie rattlesnake can be found in Northwest Iowa, in the Loess Hills area. The timber rattlesnake, copperhead, and massasauga can all be found in eastern Iowa. The Iowa Poison Control Center typically receives several calls each year related to snake bites and luckily most do not involve these venomous species. However, if a patient with a bite from one of these snakes presents to their local healthcare facility, swift intervention and treatment is paramount.

First and foremost, remain calm and transport the patient to medical care. Initial evaluation of the patient should include assessment of the ABC's, good supportive care, standard wound care, and tetanus prophylaxis. Immobilization of the affected extremity is reasonable if not detrimental to transport to definitive care. Mark the leading edge of swelling - initially every 15-30 minutes. Additionally, treat the patient's pain. And don't forget to call the Poison Center! It is NOT recommended to "cut and suck" the bite, use hot or cold packs, shock the wound, or use tourniquets/pressure immobilization dressings. Elevation of the extremity may help minimize swelling and pain but should be deferred until antivenom has been administered.

Antivenom is the cornerstone of treatment for snake envenomation. Historically, Antivenin Crotalidae Polyvalent, manufactured by Wyeth Laboratories was introduced in 1953 but is no longer on the market. In 2000, Crotalidae Polyvalent Immune Fab (CroFab®) was approved by the FDA and was the primary antivenom until 2018 when Crotalidae Immune F(ab')<sub>2</sub> (Anavip®) was approved by the FDA to treat adult and pediatric North American rattlesnake envenomation. The indication for Anavip® has since expanded to include all North American pit vipers.

Either Anavip® or CroFab® can be used to treat envenomations by any of Iowa's venomous. One question that's been asked is if one product is preferred or better than the other. Both CroFab® and Anavip® are safe and effective products with availability and cost likely being the largest factor influencing product choice. The current data suggests Anavip® may have an advantage in reducing recurrent venom effects due to a longer half-life but either option would be appropriate.

Bites and stings are common, especially now that summer months are here. Whether it be from a snake, spider, bee/wasp, tick, or anything else, if you have any questions for a nurse, pharmacist, or physician of the Iowa Poison Control Center, we are available 24/7 by calling 1-800-222-1222.

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Post and share this edition of **Poison Hotline** with your colleagues. Send comments or questions to Poison Hotline, 712-234-8775 (fax) or [Tammy.Noble@UnityPoint.org](mailto:Tammy.Noble@UnityPoint.org). To subscribe or unsubscribe from this distribution list, contact the IPCC education office at 712-279-3717. Read past issues of **Poison Hotline** at [www.iowapoisn.org](http://www.iowapoisn.org).

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