



Poison HOTLINE

1-800-222-1222

May 2026



Did you know

Container transfers are a common reason for accidental exposures reported to the IPCC. When substances are transferred or decanted from their original containers into unmarked, improperly labeled containers, a multitude of exposures can occur.

Products reported to the IPCC where a container transfer was cause for the exposure include bleach, gasoline, hydrogen peroxide, all-purpose cleaners, and automotive products (including antifreeze), just to name a few. When they are stored in empty soda bottles, water bottles, etc., accidents can happen.

Furthermore, if the original container has been thrown away, it can be increasingly difficult to assess the true severity of the exposure when exact contents are unknown.

Call the IPCC for treatment information related to these or any other agents.

Hydrocarbons

The cold and blustery winter months are finally behind us and that can only mean one thing: summer is almost here! Sunshine and warmth lend themselves to more outdoor activities. While barbecues, bonfires, and yard work can breathe new life into us as we spend time with family, friends, and neighbors, the breathing can be cut short with hazardous exposures to hydrocarbons (HCs). Products such as lighter fluid, gasoline, and torch fuel can be dangerous if not used and stored properly. To help prevent poisonings and injuries, always store these products safely and keep them out of sight and reach of children.

The main concern with an HC exposure is the risk for aspiration. The aspiration risk is inversely related to the HC's viscosity. For example, an HC with a high viscosity (like petroleum jelly or motor oil) has a low risk of aspiration. Conversely, an HC with a low viscosity (like lighter fluid, gasoline, torch fuel) has a high risk of aspiration. Aspiration can be particularly concerning and may cause symptoms such as coughing, choking, gagging, or gasping. In the absence of aspiration symptoms, effects are typically gastrointestinal in nature and may include nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

If a person has aspirated a hydrocarbon:

- They should be immediately referred to the ED or call 911.
- DO NOT administer activated charcoal as this can increase the risk of aspiration if the patient subsequently vomits.

Patients with significant aspiration exposures can develop chemical pneumonitis, acute respiratory distress syndrome, and respiratory failure, and may need to be intubated and ventilated. Moreover, an additional concern with HCs is their flammability. Patients who have been exposed to a hydrocarbon should keep away from open flames to mitigate the risk of combustion.

For more information, the specially trained nurses, pharmacists, and physicians of the IPCC are available 24/7/365 by calling 1-800-222-1222.

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