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Serving Nebraska, Idaho, Wyoming, American Samoa, and Federated States of Micronesia

From: Ron Kirschner, MD, Medical Director
To: ALL HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
Subject: How Can We Best Serve You?
Date: 6/16/20

- Our Poison Center (PC) has a team of experienced, certified nurses, pharmacists, and physician toxicologists whose goal is to meet healthcare providers' needs and help ensure the best possible patient outcomes. We are always available to serve you and would like to outline some of our procedures.
- When you call the PC, our nurses and pharmacists will obtain a patient history and then provide patient-specific treatment recommendations. Written information may also be sent upon request. In addition, a physician toxicologist is always available for direct consultation. **Please feel free to ask our staff specific questions so that we can focus on best meeting your needs.**
- The PC may call the ED or other hospital units to inform providers about a patient who is coming from home or another facility so they have the history in advance. We will also offer our treatment recommendations. **We do understand, however, that decisions about patient care are ultimately up to the bedside providers.**
- After initial contact, the PC makes follow up calls to monitor the patient's progress and collaborate with practitioners in providing optimal care. We try to work with providers to minimize disruption and be efficient with their time.
- When following up, the PC often requests lab and EKG results. Even "normal" results may be significant in an overdose setting. Examples: 1) Following acetaminophen (APAP) ingestion, a rise in ALT from 25 to 50 suggests increased risk for serious liver injury. An ALT of 50 might not be concerning in most patients, but would prompt us to extend acetylcysteine treatment in this example, even if APAP had cleared. 2) After possible accidental ingestion of antifreeze (ethylene glycol), we might recommend serial electrolytes to check for development of an anion gap acidosis from metabolites. 3) After intentional overdose, we recommend an EKG because so many drugs can affect cardiac conduction. If QTc prolongation is present, we suggest correction of any electrolyte abnormalities that may be contributing and a follow up EKG.
- We also want to make you aware that for patients with unknown suspected poisoning or overdose, you can contact the PC for suggestions on diagnostic testing and treatment based on the clinical presentation.
- Your satisfaction is important to us and we value your feedback. Please consider completing the attached survey, and do not hesitate to contact me (rkirschner@nebraskamed.com) with any questions or concerns.

Our nurse and pharmacist certified specialists in poison information and physician toxicologists are available 24 hours a day to answer your questions.