



To: Physicians, Nurses, and Other Health Care Providers in Federated States of Micronesia

From: The Education Department of the Nebraska Regional Poison Center

Subject: Hydrocarbon Update

Date: October 1, 2021

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- The Nebraska Regional Poison Center frequently receives calls about ingestion of hydrocarbons (HCs) such as gasoline, kerosene, and lamp oil. Most are unintentional ingestions by small children.
- HCs can be derived from coal, petroleum, or plant products such as pine oil.
- The most common clinical effects are pneumonitis from aspiration and CNS depression. More volatile HCs such as gasoline or kerosene pose the greatest risk for aspiration.
- Certain HCs can affect the liver (carbon tetrachloride), kidney (toluene), peripheral nerves (n-hexane), or cause dysrhythmias (halogenated HCs, usually following inhalational abuse).
- HCs are irritating to skin and can cause chemical burns with prolonged exposure.
  - Following exposure, contaminated clothing should be removed, and exposed skin washed with soap and water.
- Gastric lavage and activated charcoal are generally not recommended.
- Most patients with pulmonary effects will have signs such as coughing, wheezing, or dyspnea. Chest X-ray findings may be delayed.
  - Patients with no respiratory findings after 6-8 h are unlikely to develop pneumonitis.
  - Patients with pulmonary effects should have pulse oximetry monitored. They should be given supplemental oxygen and bronchodilators as needed.
  - Antibiotics are recommended only if bacterial superinfection is suspected, and steroids are of unproven benefit. The mainstay of treatment for HC chemical pneumonitis is supportive care.
- A complete metabolic panel is recommended following exposure to halogenated HCs, toluene, or other aromatic HCs.
- Patients with CNS depression should have cardiac monitoring, an EKG, and supplemental oxygen.

**Our trained staff of nurse/pharmacist specialists in poison information and physician toxicologists are available 24 hours a day to answer your questions**

**To reach a Registered Nurse or Pharmacist dial 288, wait for operator, then dial 888-222-4516. We are available to assist you with any poisoning, or even questions 24 hours a day.**