

## How to Care for Your Child with Iron Overdose

This leaflet will provide you with information about iron overdose symptoms, diagnosis, treatments and home care advice.



### What is an iron overdose?

- Iron overdose happens when your child takes too much iron by mistake. This can be from supplements or medicine.
- Iron comes in different forms; like tablets, gummies, or liquids, and is sometimes included in multivitamins.

### What are the symptoms of an iron overdose?

- A toxic iron overdose may cause mild to severe symptoms, depending on how much iron your child has ingested.
- Within a few hours, a child might experience symptoms like nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- If it gets worse, the child could have serious issues like an acid imbalance in his/her body or heart problems.
- If not treated, some children might also suffer liver damage days later.
- In very severe cases, iron poisoning can lead to death.

## How is an iron overdose diagnosed?

- If you suspect your child has an iron overdose, call the Qatar Poison Center (QPC) immediately at 4003-1111, or go to the nearest emergency department.
- Keep the iron bottle or container with you if you have it. The doctor will ask some questions about the number of tablets that your child took, the concentration of iron and volume of the bottle, as well as the elemental iron content that is labelled. This information helps the doctor find out how much iron your child took.
- In some cases, the doctor may also do blood tests, an abdominal X-ray, and other tests as needed.

## How is iron overdose treated?

### **In cases of below-toxic ingestions:**

- Your child can go home safely after the doctor ensures that they have no other symptoms.
- However, you should keep an eye on your child for any stomach issues while at home.
- Call the Qatar Poison Center if you notice any symptoms and follow their advice.

### **In case of potentially toxic ingestions:**

- The doctor may prescribe medicines for nausea and vomiting, and IV fluids for dehydration or low blood pressure.
- The doctor may request an X-ray to see if there is any leftover iron in the stomach and intestines, which may be treated with a procedure called Whole Bowel Irrigation, where large volumes of a certain solution are administered through the mouth or the nose to empty the gastrointestinal tract of any remaining iron before it is absorbed into the bloodstream.
- In some cases, a medicine injection (Deferoxamine) may be used to treat severe iron overdose toxicity.

## Home safety tips to prevent iron overdose:

- Keep all medicines and supplements out of reach of children and in a locked cabinet.
- Be aware that iron comes in many brands and forms. Know how much elemental iron you are giving your child.
- Note that iron can be found in many multivitamins and supplements, be careful not to give iron from multiple sources at same time.
- Know that even with normal doses, iron can cause mild side effects like constipation or black stool. To help prevent these, make sure your child drinks enough water and eats lots of fibers; such as lentils, green peas, broccoli, raspberries, bananas, and brown rice.

## When should I go to the Emergency Department?

- If you suspect that your child has an iron overdose, call the Qatar Poison Center immediately at 4003-1111 for professional medical advice.
- If you can't reach the Qatar Poison Center, go directly to the nearest emergency department.
- If your child has moderate to severe stomach symptoms, like frequent vomiting or diarrhea, go to the nearest emergency department immediately.

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