

How to Care for Your Child after exposure to Household Cleaners

This leaflet will provide you with information about household cleaners' toxicity; including causes, symptoms, diagnosis, treatments and home care advice.



What are household cleaners?

Household cleaners are products used for cleaning purposes at home. Some can be highly dangerous if ingested, touched or breathed in.

Common household cleaners include:

- Bleaches
- Detergents
- Drain Openers
- Oven Cleaners
- Disinfectants
- Toilet bowl Cleaners
- Rust Removers
- Degreasers

What causes household cleaners' toxicity?

- Improper storage of cleaning products such as; leaving them open, within children's reach, or near food.
- Storing the products in food or drinks containers, leading to mix-ups such as; storing detergents in water bottles.
- Direct skin contacts with cleaning products without protective clothing such as; gloves.
- Breathing in fumes from mixing different cleaning products.
- Leaving children unsupervised around household cleaners.
- Intentional ingestion of cleaning products for self-harm, especially in adolescents.

What are the symptoms of household cleaners' toxicity?

Symptoms vary depending on the type of product and the method of exposure:

If swallowed:

- Nausea, vomiting, or belly pain
- More saliva or drool in the mouth
- Swelling of lip or tongue
- Difficulty swallowing or coughing
- Vomiting blood
- Losing voice or having a raspy voice

If breathed in:

- Coughing or breathing difficulty
- Noisy breathing or chest pain
- Redness in the eyes or feeling dizzy
- Loss of consciousness

If exposed to skin:

- Skin burn, redness, itching or pain

If exposed to eye:

- Redness or pain in the eyes
- Tearing or discharge
- Swollen eyelids or a burning feeling in the eyes

How is household cleaners' toxicity diagnosed?

- Diagnosis is based on the history of exposure, symptoms, and assessment by the medical doctor.
- Not all cases of exposure require medical assessment or referral to the emergency department.
- The Qatar Poison Center (QPC) will assess the case and advise whether observation at home is appropriate.

How is household cleaners' toxicity treated?

Treatment depends on the route of body exposure, the type of product, and your child's symptoms.

Treatments options include:

- Eye and skin washing
- Medications for nausea or vomiting
- Pain relief medications
- Oxygen for breathing difficulty
- Antihistamine (allergy medicine) for skin reactions

Home care advice

If your child is exposed to any cleaning products:

- Call the Qatar Poison Center (QPC) at 4003-1111 immediately.
- Remove clothing with product spills or vomit to prevent further skin contact.
- Wash the exposed skin or eyes well with clean water.
- Do not try to make your child vomit.
- Do not give your child any liquids to drink unless advised by the Qatar Poison Center.
- Move your child to fresh air if toxic fumes are breathed in.

When should I seek medical advice?

Seek medical advice if your child:

- Has trouble swallowing or refuses to drink.
- Is vomiting repeatedly.
- Has cough, chest pain, or noisy breathing.

Call 999 or Go to the Emergency Department immediately, if your child:

- Vomits blood or passes blood in their stool.
- Experiences sudden and severe belly pain.
- Has difficulty breathing or is choking.
- Has skin rash or is itching.
- Loses consciousness or feels dizzy .

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