

Mushroom Poisoning

People are poisoned each year after eating mushrooms from their yard or in the wild. These mushrooms should not be eaten because it's difficult to tell the difference between safe mushrooms and poisonous ones. Poisonous mushrooms can make you sick. **Some can cause death.**

Common **poisoning symptoms** include:

- + nausea
- + stomach cramps
- + vomiting
- + diarrhea (sometimes bloody)
- + headache
- + dizziness
- + flushing (warm and red) in the face and abdomen (tummy)
- + heart palpitations (pounding, fluttering heart).

More **serious symptoms** include:

- + seizures
- + hallucinations
- + problems breathing
- + kidney/liver failure
- + coma

Symptoms can appear right after eating the poisonous mushroom. Or they could appear several hours later. Symptoms that occur within 2 hours are less dangerous than those that appear later (after 6 hours).

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Mushroom poisoning is difficult to diagnose. Your doctor will examine you. They will ask you about your symptoms and when and what you ate recently. The diagnosis is based on the information you provide.

CAN IT BE PREVENTED OR AVOIDED?

You can avoid mushroom poisoning by not eating mushrooms picked from the ground. It's difficult to tell which mushrooms are poisonous and which are not. They can be growing next to each other. There are no tests to tell a poisonous mushroom from a non-poisonous mushroom. Assume all wild mushrooms are poisonous. It's safer to buy them from the store.

Mushrooms on the ground in forests are more dangerous than mushrooms in yards. Cooking poisonous mushrooms will not remove the toxins.

WHEN TO GET HELP

Go to the nearest Emergency Department or call Poison Control Centre at 1-800-567-8911 (toll free in B.C.) or 604-682-5050 in Greater Vancouver if you suspect that you or someone you are with has mushroom poisoning.

Mushroom Poisoning - Continued

- + If possible, bring a few of the mushrooms the person ate with you to the doctor or the emergency room.
- + The phone number for the Poison Control Center is **1-800-567-8911** (tollfree in B.C.) or 604-682-5050 in Greater Vancouver. This number is answered 24 hours. It's a good idea to keep this number in your phone contacts.
- + **Call 911** if the person is unconscious, not breathing, or having convulsions (uncontrolled shaking or seizures).

If the person has thrown up, the worst is probably over. Doctors may give the person activated charcoal. The doctor will check the person's temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure. They will be watched closely for severe symptoms and complications. The person will be sent home if they have no symptoms of severe poisoning, and if the mushroom is considered harmless. The doctor will ask you to watch the person for any symptoms of mushroom poisoning for the next 24 hours.

TO LEARN MORE ASK

- + Your health care provider.
- + HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP

- Follow up with your primary care provider in ___ days.

Find this information sheet on the BC Emergency Medicine Network website:

www.bcemn.ca/clinical_resource/mushroompoisoning/

bcemn.ca

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team. This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.

