Always call the Virginia Poison Center if you suspect a poisoning
(804) 828-9123 or (800) 222-1222

The poison center nurse will quickly tell you if there is any risk to the person, what is the correct care to give, and whether they will need to be seen by a doctor. MOST cases of poisoning can be safely treated with simple first aid.

Swallowed Poison . . .
Immediate first aid actions:
- allow the victim to rest
- give not more than 2 ounces of water

Do not give activated charcoal unless told to do so by the poison center. Find out what has been swallowed, including the time it was taken, the exact name of the substance or medicine, and how much has been swallowed. If a liquid chemical has been swallowed, rinse the mouth with water (and spit it out) several times. Call an ambulance only if the victim is unconscious, seizing or having severe breathing difficulty. Contact the poison center for more treatment advice.

Poison in the Eye . . .
Immediately rinse out the eye(s) with a gentle, steady stream of warm water for 15 minutes. This is very uncomfortable, and young children may not be able to cooperate. Help the victim to keep eyes open as the rinsing is done: if this too difficult then encourage them to blink constantly as the eye is rinsed. Avoid eye drops. Do not delay eye rinsing—it is best way to prevent eye injury! Contact the poison center for more treatment advice.

Inhaled Poison . . .
Victims should be moved into fresh air and allowed to rest. The room(s) in which the gas/vapor occurred should be ventilated with open windows, fans, etc. Breathing in fresh air is the most important first aid. Count the number of breaths per minute. Remember that persons with respiratory diseases, especially asthma, may react to inhaled gas/vapor more severely than others. It may trigger an asthmatic attack in these persons regardless of whether they have been “poisoned” by the chemical(s) involved. First aid for asthma attacks caused by inhaled chemicals is the same as for asthma caused by other things. Contact the poison center for more treatment advice.

Poison on the Skin . . .
Remove any clothing that has become contaminated by the substance(s). Wear latex gloves to avoid getting any of the poison on your own skin. If the poison is a dry substance, try to gently brush off as much as possible before rinsing. Rinse the skin with a steady stream of water for 5 to 10 minutes. Then wash the skin with mild soap, and rinse with lots of water for another 5 minutes. Contact the poison center for more treatment advice.

For more information, please visit our website www.vapoison.org or call our Business Line (804) 828-4780