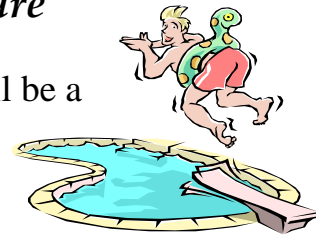


Published by: Virginia Poison Center

## *Swimming Pool Chemicals: Handle with care*

Spending long, lazy summer days at poolside will be a favorite activity for many families this summer. But that clear, clean pool water must be maintained with a variety of chemicals. Most of them can cause injury to skin, eyes and lungs with direct contact. The extent of the injury depends upon the chemicals concentration, the product formulation (liquid, gas or granular) and the length of exposure. Knowing the correct actions to take in case of exposure is important.



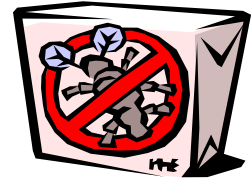
If pool chemicals get on the skin, they should be immediately washed off with lots of clear water. Chemicals in the eyes must be quickly flushed out with a gentle stream of warm water for at least 15 minutes. Simply wiping the eye with a wet cloth is not enough treatment! After rinsing the skin or flushing the eyes, call the Virginia Poison Center for advice about any other treatment that might be needed.

When pool and spa chemicals are stored in high temperatures, they may produce vapors, which build up inside the closed container. The person opening the container then gets a “blast” of the chemical vapors, which can be harmful if inhaled. If you have asthma, you are especially likely to have a reaction to the vapors. Mild nose and throat irritation, or more serious respiratory problems such as cough and shortness of breath can be the result. If these symptoms happen, get into fresh air immediately. The poison center should then be called for further treatment advice.

Proper use of pool chemicals helps to prevent accidental poisonings. Never mix chemicals unless the labels specifically say it is okay to do so. Follow labels exactly in using, storing and disposing of these chemicals. Avoid the vapors by opening containers away from your face. And always store chemical products in their original containers.

In most cases, exposure to pool chemicals can be handled without going to a doctor if the poison center is called right away for expert advice. Don't let a chemical accident ruin your summer fun. Have the Virginia Poison Center's emergency number – (800) 222-1222 – posted near the swimming pool.

## *Pesticide Safety*



Although pesticides can be beneficial, they can also be very dangerous if used carelessly or if not stored properly, out of reach of children. In 1995, an estimated 79,000 American children were exposed to common household pesticides improperly. Most pesticides are absorbed through skin contact and by inhalation. Follow these safety tips:

- Store pesticides in a locked cabinet or shed, in original containers
- Before applying pesticides, remove children and their toys as well as pets from the area and keep them away until the product has dried, or as long as recommended by the label;
- Read the label and follow the directions exactly;
- Never put pesticides in food or beverage containers;
- If you use of a pesticide is interrupted (perhaps by a phone call), reclose the package and be sure to put it out of reach of children while you are gone
- Keep the telephone number of the Virginia Poison Center posted – and call immediately if you suspect a pesticide poisoning.

### **POISON CENTER SAVES LIVES**

What is the correct first action to take if someone is exposed to a possible poison? Call the Virginia Poison Center at (800) 222-1222, or in the Richmond metro area at 828-9123. Your call will be answered by nurses with special training in toxicology, the science of poisons. Twenty-four hours daily, they answer emergency calls about poisoning and assist with first aid advice. The poison center staff will determine whether you need to go to a doctor. The Virginia Poison Center responds to approximately 90 calls daily. The majority of these cases are safely handled over the phone, avoiding costly trips to the emergency department.

Some examples of emergencies that the poison center can help with include: overdoses of medications, ingestion of household products, bites and stings from venomous creatures, inhaling fumes or vapors, chemicals accidentally splashed into eyes and chemical burns to the skin.

For more information, or to request brochures or telephone stickers, please contact:



**Virginia Poison Center**  
VCU Medical Center  
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