

# Agricultural Chemical Exposure First Aid Guidance



Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division

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## Time is critical, quickly assess the situation and gather information:

If a person has been exposed to pesticides or anhydrous ammonia and is unconscious, having trouble breathing or having convulsions, ACT FAST.

Make sure the scene is safe before approaching the victim. Wear appropriate PPE if the person is doused with an agricultural chemical. Get the person to fresh air and irrigate exposed skin or eyes with clean water.

Call 911 immediately and follow any instructions.

Refer to the product label (Statement of Practical Treatment) and Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for first aid instructions. Provide the SDS or label to the medical service provider.

Call Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) if the chemical is unknown or for treatment recommendations when a person is awake

## Symptoms of Pesticide Poisoning May Include:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Headache             | <input type="checkbox"/> Tremors          | <input type="checkbox"/> Coughing       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness            | <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea           | <input type="checkbox"/> Drooling       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weakness             | <input type="checkbox"/> Abdominal Cramps | <input type="checkbox"/> Runny Eyes     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loss of Coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Diarrhea         | <input type="checkbox"/> Runny Nose     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle Twitching     | <input type="checkbox"/> Profuse Sweating | <input type="checkbox"/> Blurred Vision |



Pesticides can irritate or damage skin, eyes and other tissues and result in redness, irritation or blistering, or trigger an allergic reactions and cause itching and a rash. Pesticides can damage mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, mouth and throat and cause stinging and swelling to these membranes, and damage lung tissue causing coughing, wheezing, rapid

breathing, drooling, and shortness of breath.

Pesticides can cause internal injuries if ingested or inhaled, or if large areas of skin are exposed. These injuries include damage to the stomach or intestines that leads to nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps and diarrhea. Exposures can cause neurologic effects that result in a headache, sleepiness, muscle twitching and numbness. Under certain conditions, pesticides could cause a person to lose consciousness or have seizures.

Medical personnel needing more information can find a comprehensive document on treating exposures at:

[www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/recognition-andmanagement-pesticide-poisonings](http://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/recognition-andmanagement-pesticide-poisonings)

## Anhydrous Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) Exposure Symptoms:

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Burns to skin, eyes, nose and mouth
- Swelling of mouth and throat

Anhydrous ammonia is very corrosive as both a vapor and a liquid. Contact with any internal or external tissues can cause serious burns.



Any inhalational or oral exposure can cause swelling and damage the mouth, throat, airway and lungs and result in coughing or shortness of breath. Serious exposure could cause a person to stop breathing. It comes out very cold as a liquid, so can cause frostbite burns as well.

Anyone exposed to anhydrous ammonia should immediately move into fresh air. Exposed clothes should be removed and any exposed body parts flushed with lots of water. If the person is awake and breathing normally, any exposed parts can be submerged in a tank of water.