



## CASE DEFINITION

### Paraquat

#### Clinical description

Ingestion of paraquat typically results in gastrointestinal illness, including oropharyngeal ulcerations, vomiting, and diarrhea, which might contain blood. Patients might have dyspnea and hemoptysis as a result of pulmonary edema or hemorrhage, which can progress to fibrosis over the course of days to weeks (1-3).

#### Laboratory criteria for diagnosis

- A case in which paraquat in urine, plasma, or serum is detected, as determined by a commercial laboratory  
-OR-
- Detection of paraquat in environmental samples, as determined by NIOSH or FDA

#### Case classification

- *Suspected*: A case in which a potentially exposed person is being evaluated by health-care workers or public health officials for poisoning by a particular chemical agent, but no specific credible threat exists.
- *Probable*: A clinically compatible case in which a high index of suspicion (credible threat or patient history regarding location and time) exists for paraquat exposure, or an epidemiologic link exists between this case and a laboratory-confirmed case.
- *Confirmed*: A clinically compatible case in which laboratory tests have confirmed exposure.

The case can be confirmed if laboratory testing was not performed because either a predominant amount of clinical and nonspecific laboratory evidence of a particular chemical was present or a 100% certainty of the etiology of the agent is known.

#### Additional resources

1. Bismuth C, Garnier R, Baud FJ, Muszynski J, Keyes C. Paraquat poisoning: an overview of the current status. *Drug Saf* 1990;5:243-51.
2. Bismuth C, Garnier R, Dally S, Fournier PE, Scherrmann JM. Prognosis and treatment of paraquat poisoning: a review of 28 cases. *J Toxicol Clin Toxicol* 1982;19:461-74.
3. Vale JA, Meredith TJ, Buckley BM. Paraquat poisoning: clinical features and immediate general management. *Hum Toxicol* 1987;6:41-7.

This document is based on CDC's best current information. It may be updated as new information becomes available. For more information, visit [www.bt.cdc.gov/chemical](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/chemical), or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).