
Carbon Disulfide (CS₂) Patient Information Sheet

This handout provides information and follow-up instructions for persons who have been exposed to carbon disulfide.

What is carbon disulfide?

Carbon disulfide is a very flammable liquid that readily evaporates when exposed to air. Pure carbon disulfide liquid is colorless with a pleasant odor. Most industrially-used carbon disulfide liquid is yellowish in color and has an unpleasant foul-smelling odor. Carbon disulfide has many industrial and agricultural uses. Most potential for exposure comes from its use in the rayon-producing industry. It is shipped and handled as a flammable and explosive liquid in a special container.

What immediate health effects can be caused by exposure to carbon disulfide?

Inhaling carbon disulfide causes irritation to the nose, eyes, throat, and lungs. Typical symptoms include sore throat, runny nose, burning eyes, and cough. Inhaling high levels can cause difficulty breathing. Skin contact with carbon disulfide vapor or liquid can cause irritation or burns. Acute neurological effects may result from inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact and may include headache, confusion, psychosis, and coma. Acute exposure to extremely high levels of carbon disulfide may result in death.

Can carbon disulfide poisoning be treated?

There is no antidote for carbon disulfide, but its effects can be treated and most acutely-exposed persons recover completely. Persons who have inhaled large amounts of carbon disulfide might need to be hospitalized. Persons who have come into direct skin or eye contact with carbon disulfide liquid or vapors may need to be treated for skin or eye chemical burns.

Are any future health effects likely to occur?

A single exposure from which a person recovers quickly is not likely to cause delayed or long-term effects.

What tests can be done if a person has been exposed to carbon disulfide?

Specific tests for the presence of carbon disulfide in blood or urine are not generally useful. If a severe exposure has occurred, blood analyses, x-rays, and breathing tests might show whether the lungs have been injured. The level of a metabolite of carbon disulfide (2-thiazolidine-4-carboxylic acid) can be measured in the urine, but can not be used to determine the degree of exposure to carbon disulfide.

Where can more information about carbon disulfide be found?

More information about carbon disulfide can be obtained from your regional poison control center; your state, county, or local health department; the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR); your doctor; or a clinic in your area that specializes in occupational and environmental health. If the exposure happened at work, you may wish to discuss it with your employer, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), or the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Ask the person who gave you this form for help in locating these telephone numbers.

Follow-up Instructions

Keep this page and take it with you to your next appointment. Follow *only* the instructions checked below.

- Call your doctor or the Emergency Department if you develop any unusual signs or symptoms within the next 24 hours, especially:
 - ▼ eye, nose, throat irritation
 - ▼ coughing or wheezing
 - ▼ difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - ▼ chest pain or tightness
 - ▼ nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or stomach pain
 - ▼ dizziness, incoordination, blurred vision
 - ▼ mood or behavioral changes
 - ▼ headache

No follow-up appointment is necessary unless you develop any of the symptoms listed above.

Call for an appointment with Dr. _____ in the practice of _____.
When you call for your appointment, please say that you were treated in the Emergency Department at _____ Hospital by _____ and were advised to be seen again in _____ days.

Return to the Emergency Department/ _____ Clinic on (date) _____ at _____ AM/PM for a follow-up examination.

Do not perform vigorous physical activities for 1 to 2 days.

You may resume everyday activities including driving and operating machinery.

Do not return to work for _____ days.

You may return to work on a limited basis. See instructions below.

Avoid exposure to cigarette smoke for 72 hours; smoke may worsen the condition of your lungs.

Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages for at least 24 hours; alcohol may worsen injury to your stomach or have other effects.

Avoid taking the following medications: _____

You may continue taking the following medication(s) that your doctor(s) prescribed for you: ____

Other instructions: _____

• Provide the Emergency Department with the name and the number of your primary care physician so that the ED can send him or her a record of your emergency department visit.

• You or your physician can get more information on the chemical by contacting: _____
_____ or _____, or by checking out the following Internet
Web sites: _____;

Signature of patient _____ Date _____

Signature of physician _____ Date _____