

## **Gasoline Patient Information Sheet**

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

### **What is gasoline?**

At room temperature, gasoline is a clear to pale brown or pink liquid that contains a mixture of hydrocarbons (from crude oil) with a variety of substances added to improve its performance as a fuel. It is used as a fuel in cars, trucks, and light aircraft.

### **What immediate health effects can be caused by exposure to gasoline?**

Breathing gasoline vapor can cause headache, nausea, and dizziness. Extremely high levels can cause fainting and even death. Gasoline in the air can also irritate the eyes, nose, and throat. Gasoline splashed in the eyes can cause eye injury. Swallowing gasoline can cause irritation of the gastric tract and breathing difficulties. When liquid gasoline contacts the skin, it may cause redness and blisters. Generally, the longer the exposure or the greater level of exposure, the more severe the symptoms.

### **Can gasoline poisoning be treated?**

There is no antidote for gasoline poisoning, but its effects can be treated, and most exposed persons get well. Persons who have experienced serious symptoms may need to be hospitalized.

### **Are any future health effects likely to occur?**

A single small exposure from which a person recovers quickly is not likely to cause delayed or long-term effects. Repeated exposure to very high levels of gasoline can cause poor appetite, weakness, and even brain or kidney damage. Gasoline contains benzene and other additives that may cause future health problems after repeated, high-level exposures.

### **What tests can be done if a person has been exposed to gasoline?**

Specific tests for the presence of gasoline in blood generally are not useful to the doctor. If a severe exposure has occurred, blood and urine analyses and other tests may show whether the nervous system, heart, kidneys, liver, or lungs have been damaged. Testing is not needed in every case.

### **Where can more information about gasoline be found?**

More information about gasoline 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:
  - stomach pain or vomiting
  - coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath
  - confusion or fainting
  - increased pain or a discharge from exposed eyes
  - increased redness pain or a pus-like discharge in the area of a skin burn
  - lack of or infrequent urination

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 \_\_\_\_\_