

To: All Washington State Emergency Departments

From: William T. Hurley, MD, FACEP
Medical Director, Washington Poison Center

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Subject: Ethylene Glycol (antifreeze) Poisoning Alert

The Washington Poison Center has noticed an increase in moderate to severe Ethylene Glycol poisonings over the past few weeks. At the same time we have identified a decrease in Fomepizole availability.

Fomepizole (4-Methyl-Pyrazole or Antizol®) can be used either alone or in combination with hemodialysis. It prevents and reverses the development of metabolic acidosis and renal failure by blocking the accumulation of toxic metabolites. When Fomepizole is started immediately following an ethylene glycol or methanol ingestion, or where ingestion is suspected based on patient history and/or positive lab values (anion gap metabolic acidosis, increased osmolar gap, visual disturbances, oxalate crystals in the urine, or a serum ethylene glycol or methanol concentration greater than 20 mg/dL) the outcome of the patient is greatly improved. In many cases the need for hemodialysis is eliminated.

The poison center is urging all Emergency Departments to check with their hospital pharmacy, before the need arrives, to ensure an adequate stock of Fomepizole. A loading dose of 15 mg/kg IV over 30 minutes is followed by maintenance doses of 10 mg/kg every 12 hours for 4 doses, then 15 mg/kg every 12 hours until ethylene glycol levels are below 20 milligrams/deciliters. Because Fomepizole is dialyzable, the frequency of dosing should be increased to every 4 hours when given in combination with hemodialysis.

If you have questions about this topic or any suspected poisoning case in your area, please contact the Washington Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. We have nurses, pharmacists, poison specialists, & a Medical Toxicologist available 24/7.

William Hurley MD