

What is Activated Charcoal?

Activated Charcoal is a light, finely divided, tasteless, black powder that binds to the poison to keep the poison from hurting your body.

Why use Activated Charcoal?

Activated Charcoal has been found to be one of the treatments for many poisons. But it does **NOT** work on every poison so you should always call the Washington Poison Center, your physician, or a pharmacist first.

Where do you get Activated Charcoal?

Activated Charcoal can be purchased at your local pharmacy.

What type of Activated Charcoal should you get?

Activated Charcoal tablets or capsules should **NOT** be used for poisons. The Washington Poison Center recommends using small gram bottles of dry powder to which you will add water or soda pop. Activated Charcoal will sometimes come in bottles already mixed with water or sorbitol (sorbitol can cause diarrhea in children.) **NEVER use burnt toast, charred wood, or charcoal briquettes to treat poisons.**

Who can administer Activated Charcoal?

YOU CAN, once the Washington Poison Center or a physician has recommended administering Activated Charcoal; they will provide directions on how to give it based on the person's weight.

When can Activated Charcoal be used?

Only use when you have been told to do so by the Washington Poison Center or by a physician. Only give to a child when they are alert and cooperative.

When should Activated Charcoal not be used?

- **NEVER FORCE A PERSON TO DRINK ACTIVATED CHARCOAL!!**
- Do not use if the person is not fully conscious.
- Do not use if the person is coughing or choking a lot.
- Do not use in children less than 1 year of age.

What should you watch for after giving Activated Charcoal?

- As many as 60% of patients will vomit at least some of the charcoal - no one is certain why - but it does not need to be re-administered.
- You should expect to see dark charcoal stool within 2 days.

Expert Poison Information 24/7: 1-800-222-1222