

1,1,1-Trichloroethane (CH₃CCl₃)

Patient Information Sheet

This handout provides information and follow-up instructions for persons who have been exposed to 1,1,1-trichloroethane.

What is 1,1,1-trichloroethane?

1,1,1-Trichloroethane is a colorless, volatile, nonflammable liquid with a sweet, chloroform-like odor. It is used to make other chemicals. It has been used to clean grease from metal parts. It used to be found in many household products, such as spot cleaners and glues. You may still have some of these products in your home, garage or workshop, although use of 1,1,1-trichloroethane has been phased out by the EPA because it damages the ozone layer. Sometimes people intentionally inhale it to get high.

What immediate health effects can be caused by exposure to 1,1,1-trichloroethane?

Breathing or swallowing 1,1,1-trichloroethane can cause lightheadedness, dizziness, blurred vision, a feeling of excitement, nausea, and vomiting. Breathing or swallowing large amounts can cause irregular heart beat, fainting, coma, and even death. If the skin has been in contact with high levels of 1,1,1-trichloroethane for a long time, a skin rash or burns might develop. Generally, the more serious the exposure, the more severe the symptoms.

Can 1,1,1-trichloroethane poisoning be treated?

There is no antidote for 1,1,1-trichloroethane, but its effects can be treated and most exposed persons recover completely. Persons who have swallowed or inhaled large amounts of 1,1,1-trichloroethane might need to be hospitalized.

Are any future health effects likely to occur?

Delayed or long-term effects generally do not occur from single exposures to 1,1,1-trichloroethane. A high-dose exposure, or an exposure over many years, can affect the brain, skin, liver, and heart.

What tests can be done if a person has been exposed to 1,1,1-trichloroethane?

Specific tests for the presence of 1,1,1-trichloroethane breakdown products in blood and urine are available, but they are not generally useful to your doctor. If a severe exposure has occurred, blood and other tests might show whether the heart or liver has been damaged. Testing is not needed in every case.

Where can more information about 1,1,1-trichloroethane be found?

More information about 1,1,1-trichloroethane can be obtained from your regional poison control center; the 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:

- Sudden severe weakness, fainting, or dizziness
- irregular heartbeat
- shortness of breath, coughing, or wheezing
- increased pain or discharge from injured eyes

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 _____