



# Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention

*Serving Massachusetts and Rhode Island*

## What is Activated Charcoal?

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Activated Charcoal is a light, finely divided, tasteless, black powder that ties-up the poison and keeps the poison from hurting your body.

### Why use Activated Charcoal?

Activated Charcoal has been found to be the best choice for many poisons. But it does **NOT** work on every poison so you should always call your physician, pharmacist, or Poison Control Center to find out the best action to take in the event of a poisoning.

### Who can administer Activated Charcoal?

The Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention Serving Massachusetts and Rhode Island recommends that you call your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222 or your physician when a poisoning occurs. If necessary, they will advise you to go to the Emergency Department. *Activated charcoal should only be used by a medical professional.*

### What will happen after someone receives Activated Charcoal at the hospital?

You can expect to see a dark stool produced within two days after treatment. Contact your physician right away if the patient experiences blockage of the intestines or dehydration.

### I've heard that it is ok to use Activated Charcoal at home. Is this true?

The Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention Serving Massachusetts and Rhode Island recommends that you call your local poison center at **1-800-222-1222** or your physician when a poisoning occurs. Complications, specifically vomiting with aspiration (choking), can occur when administering Activated Charcoal and a person who is not a trained medical professional might not be able to respond appropriately, creating a potentially fatal situation. *Activated charcoal should only be used by a medical professional.*