



CAUSTIC OR CORROSIVE AGENTS

I. Protocol Overview

Caustic or corrosive agents (acids or bases) are found in use in many different types of manufacturing, cleaning, and testing. Dermal and ocular exposure can result in local irritation or burn injury, ranging from minor to severe depending on the material and concentration. Inhalation of corrosive gases might result in upper and lower respiratory irritation, leading to stridor, dyspnea, wheezing, and pulmonary edema. Ingestion can cause direct injury to tissue upon exposure and may include oral pain, ulcerations, drooling, dysphasia, vomiting, and abdominal pain.

For all suspected chemical exposures, consult the Poison Control Center (800-222-1222) located at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Information and treatment advice is available to the public and healthcare professionals at no charge.

Decontamination of patients may be needed prior to sample collection. Endoscopic and physical examination are recommended for clinical samples. No biologic marker for exposure available; however detection of caustic or corrosive agents in environmental and food samples is available for select materials. Rapid toxicological screen may rule out additional exposures; field testing of environmental samples may provide additional indicators.

The Delaware Public Health Laboratory does not perform this testing. Contact the CDC or the Poison Control Center.

II. Contact Information

24/7 CDC Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

Poison Control Center: 215-386-2100

III. CDC Website

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/caustics/casedef.asp>