



 Please call 911 if you think you have a medical emergency.

Barbiturate Abuse Treatment

Self-Care at Home

There is no home treatment for barbiturate abuse. If you believe someone has taken barbiturates inappropriately, take him or her to the hospital for evaluation by a doctor.

- Barbiturates have a narrow therapeutic index and can cause coma or death if taken inappropriately. This is especially true in children and in elderly persons.
- Because children are smaller and weigh less than adults, even small doses of barbiturates could be life threatening.
- Elderly people can be more sensitive to barbiturates and develop a coma with small doses.

Medical Treatment

The treatment of barbiturate abuse or overdose is generally supportive. The amount of support required depends on the person's symptoms.

- If the person is drowsy but awake and can swallow and breathe without difficulty, the treatment may consist of just watching the person closely.
- If the person is not breathing, a breathing machine is used to ensure the person can breathe well until the drugs have worn off.
- Most people receive a liquid form of activated charcoal to bind to any drugs in their stomach. This may be done by placing a tube into the stomach (through the nose or mouth) or by having the person drink it.
- Most people are admitted to the hospital or are observed in the emergency department for a number of hours. Other treatments depend on the specific situation.

more information from eMedicineHealth

- [When to Seek Medical Care](#)
- [Exams and Tests](#)
- [Next Steps](#)
- [Outlook](#)

For more information, read the complete article, Barbiturate Abuse

(<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=58912>) on <http://www.emedicinehealth.com>.

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