

ACTIVATED CHARCOAL

Classification: Chemical Absorbent

Actions: Binds to medications and chemicals in the gastrointestinal tract.

Indications: **ORAL** poisoning/overdose of drugs or chemicals, with time of ingestion at or under one hour.

Contraindications:

1. Ingestion of caustics or corrosives
2. Ingestion of cyanide, heavy metals (i.e. iron, arsenic, mercury) petroleum distillates or any other caustic substance.
3. Altered LOC/lack of gag reflex

Adverse Effects: **Gastrointestinal** **Respiratory**
Nausea /vomiting Aspiration

Administration: ADULT DOSE
50 Gm orally

PEDIATRIC DOSE
25 Gm orally

Onset: Immediate

Duration: 12-24 Hours

Notes:

- Activated Charcoal commonly comes in two preparation forms: with Sorbitol and Aqueous (without Sorbitol). Only the Aqueous form of charcoal is permitted for prehospital use in San Luis Obispo County. Sorbitol is a cathartic and a sweetener that will speed elimination of ingested drugs or chemicals via a profound osmotic diarrhea and adds taste to the Charcoal for oral administration.
- Do not use in a patient with potential airway compromise. Activated Charcoals should only be administered to patients who can hold the bottle and drink without assistance.
- In acetaminophen ingestion it may interfere with the antidote (Acetylcysteine /Mucomyst) given at the hospital. If given make sure to notify receiving MD so initial Mucomyst dose can be modified.
- Activated Charcoal is commonly packaged in 50 gram/8 ounce preparations and must be shaken vigorously prior to administration.