



DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...the Maryland Poison Center assists health care providers in the stocking, distribution and administration of antidotes?

Antidotes are an important treatment for certain poisonings, but there is often a delay in their administration to critically ill patients due to unavailability or lack of knowledge of how and when to give them. The Maryland Poison Center provides guidelines to assure that antidotes are stocked in adequate amounts and helps to locate specific antidotes when needed. This Tox Tidbits is the first in a series that will address the use of antidotes.

**For poisoning treatment information, call:
1-800-222-1222**

PLEASE SHARE!

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Supported by Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Crotalidae Antivenoms

Spring is the time of the year when outdoor activities increase. Areas suddenly disturbed after a period of inactivity may harbor snakes that may react in defense resulting in an increase in snakebites. Therefore, the first of our series on antidotes deals with Antivenin (Crotalidae) Polyvalent[®] by Wyeth-Ayerst and CroFab[®] Crotalidae Polyvalent Immune Fab by Protherics.

Both antivenom preparations have been shown to effectively neutralize the clinical manifestations resulting from envenomation by the two poisonous snakes indigenous to the state of Maryland, the copperhead and the timber rattlesnake. The newer preparation, CroFab[®], is a mixture of venom specific Fab fragment immunoglobulins and presents much less of a risk of acute allergic reactions and serum sickness than Antivenin (Crotalidae) Polyvalent[®]. CroFab[®] is indicated for minimal to moderate envenomations characterized by swelling several inches beyond the bite site with or without systemic involvement. Antivenin (Crotalidae) Polyvalent[®] administration is usually reserved for moderate to severe envenomations.

The effectiveness of the antivenom depends largely on administering it as soon after the envenomation as possible. CroFab[®] should be administered within four hours of the snakebite to provide the maximum possible efficacy. Antivenom has been administered much later, but the chance of neutralizing the toxic effects from the venom is markedly reduced. Administration of Antivenin (Crotalidae) Polyvalent[®] is cumbersome and fraught with complications. Contact the Maryland Poison center before administering either antivenom. The staff is well versed in snakebite management and can readily consult with a local expert in snake envenomations, if necessary.

The safer CroFab[®] is gradually replacing Antivenin (Crotalidae) Polyvalent[®], which is no longer in production. Both antivenoms are in short supply in many areas. The Maryland Poison Center recommends that hospitals stock a supply of antivenom to prevent "a mad scramble" to acquire it should a patient present to the facility with a venomous snakebite. For questions regarding the use or availability of either type of antivenom call the Maryland Poison Center.

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