

# toxtidbits

the maryland poison center's monthly update. news. advances. information.



September 2002

## It's That Time of Year Again....**JIMSON WEED INTOXICATION**

***Datura stramonium***, commonly referred to as **Jimson weed**, devil's weed, stinkweed, locoweed, or thornapple, is an annual plant found throughout Maryland. The seeds and dried leaves of Jimson weed are often ingested or smoked to deliberately produce delirium. Poisonings from this plant are often seen in the Fall, when the plant reaches maturity. **The Maryland Poison Center has been consulted on several cases of Jimson weed intoxication so far this month.** These cases have occurred in Baltimore City as well as counties throughout Maryland.



Jimson weed can reach 3-4 feet in height, has funnel-shaped flowers and prickly pods which split along 4 seams to reveal numerous small black seeds. All parts of the plant contain atropine, hyoscyamine and scopolamine. All of these alkaloids have **anticholinergic effects**. Signs and symptoms include dilated pupils, diminished bowel sounds, urinary retention, dry mouth, flushed skin, tachycardia, hyperthermia, agitation and hallucinations.

Most cases of Jimson weed intoxication respond to basic supportive care and IV **benzodiazepines**. Drugs with anticholinergic properties should be avoided (atropine, antihistamines, and some neuroleptics such as haloperidol). Physostigmine is a tertiary amine that rapidly traverses the blood brain barrier and inhibits cholinesterases resulting in reversal of anticholinergic effects. Although IV **physostigmine** reverses the effects of Jimson weed poisoning, **its use should be limited to severely affected patients, and only with poison center consultation, due to the risk of seizures and dysrhythmias.**

**The Maryland Poison Center is interested in hearing about all cases of Jimson weed poisoning and can provide valuable assistance in the management of such exposures.**

**For poisoning emergencies, call 1-800-222-1222**

### ***DID YOU KNOW THAT... .. the Maryland Poison Center has a new logo?***

Be on the lookout for new and redesigned educational materials with the logo pictured at the lower right. Help us prevent poisonings and increase awareness of the poison center by distributing pamphlets and Mr. Yuk stickers to your patients and communities. Call 410-706-2151 for more information.



**Maryland Poison Center**  
University of Maryland School of Pharmacy

Post and share this edition of **toxtidbits** with your colleagues. Send any comments or questions to: **toxtidbits**, 410.706.7184 (fax) or [Lbooze@rx.umaryland.edu](mailto:Lbooze@rx.umaryland.edu).

If you do not wish to receive faxes from the Maryland Poison Center, call 410.706.7604 or circle your fax number and fax this back to 410.706.7184. Supported by Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene