



NATIONAL PROTOCOL FOR MEDICAL EVALUATION OF CHILDREN FOUND IN DRUG LABS

PERSONNEL DECONTAMINATION

Decontamination of the children should occur prior to transport to the medical facility as medically appropriate. Removal of clothing, cleansing of the skin and hair and new clothes are the minimum requirements of decontamination.

EMERGENCY ACTIVATION

Transport immediately to the ED by emergency personnel if there is an explosion, active chemicals at the scene or the child appears ill i.e. fast breathing, obvious burns, lethargy or somnolence.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Immediate

1. Document the quantity and types of chemicals present and document how found i.e. uncapped, in tin cans, so that the exposure of the child can be determined. Document the condition of the home. Document odors and state of lab (actively cooking, decanting stage, drying stage etc.) Document the people at the scene and those who also reside in the home.
2. Personnel on scene should be both clan lab and DEC certified in order to be able to accurately collect, document and photograph the scene as to aid in the child endangerment prosecution i.e. height of chemicals, location of drugs, general state of children, guns, pornography.
3. Collect and submit all the required data for EPIC and/or other data base collection.
4. Transport child as per local DEC protocol in conjunction with CPS.

Within 72 hours

1. Children need to be interviewed by personnel trained in the forensically correct method for children. Coordinate this process with CPS.

Follow-up

1. Update databases as needed.

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Immediate

1. Assist law enforcement in the collection and documentation of the scene from the child's perspective. Decide who will photograph scene.
2. Transport child as needed to facility as designated in your local DEC protocols.
3. Placement of children in a safe environment as per local protocol.

Within 72 hours

1. There may have been other children in the family or home who were not present at the time of the seizure. All children who have lived in the home will need to be examined and their information collected for tracking.
2. The medical histories of the children need to be investigated and documented.

Follow-up

1. Input all the gathered information into a database as determined by the local, state and national protocols.

MEDICAL PERSONNEL

Immediate

1. Head to toe exam of the children within 2 to 4 hours to ensure medical stability and document any acute findings that might need treatment or change over time. This may occur in an ED, physician's office or by EMT's on scene. This should include but not be limited to a good pulmonary exam, skin exam, neurologic exam and affect (scared, happy, detached). May include observations by EMT's, RN on scene or other personnel to document the affect of the children.
2. Blood test to be obtained include a CBC (anemia, cancers, thrombocytopenias), Chemistry Panel to include BUN/Cr and LFT's (kidney and liver damage, electrolyte imbalances). Can be done acutely or within 72 hours.
3. Collect urine for toxicology. This should happen as soon as possible but must occur within 12 hours for optimal results. Submit to a lab that screens and reports for the level of detection of the test not just at NIDA standards. Chain of Evidence forms may be utilized or usual medical protocols for urine toxicology screens may be followed.

Within 72 hours

1. A complete medical evaluation as needed based on the exam done at the first evaluation.
2. Blood test if not done on the earlier exam.
3. Hepatitis B, C panels as indicated if LFT's elevated.
4. Developmental evaluation using an age appropriate standardized tool.
4. Mental health evaluation.
5. Dental evaluation.

Follow-Up

1. Repeat medical evaluation in 30 days, 6 months and 1 year.
2. Follow up developmental evaluations as needed based on the initial evaluations.
3. Follow up mental health interventions and assessments as needed.

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

1. Complete medical evaluation to assess acute medical needs.
2. Specific attention to the pulmonary exam as the chemicals can cause acute respiratory problems. RR's, O2 saturation and a CXR in the symptomatic child are the minimum required.
3. Blood tests as needed in addition to a CBC, Chemistry Panel to include BUN/Cr and LFTS.
4. Collect urine for toxicology. This should happen as soon as possible but must occur within 12 hours for optimal results. This should be submitted to a lab that screens and reports for the level of detection of the test not just at NIDA standards. Chain of Evidence forms may be utilized or usual medical protocols for urine toxicology screens may be followed.