

AN UNUSUAL CASE OF ACUTE LEAD POISONING

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Serious acute lead poisoning is very rare, but may follow accidental or purposeful ingestion of large amounts of lead or it can be caused by prolonged exposure to lead at workplace or the environment. Predominantly lead can be absorbed through the respiratory and gastrointestinal tract and interferes with enzymatic reactions in the body. We present a case of 17-years old female patient who tried to commit suicide. She drunk a powder of lead (2+) nitrate dissolved in tea. An hour later she was admitted to our clinic with acute gastrointestinal symptoms – colicky abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting. The blood lead concentration was 20.4 mmol/l. We have done gastric lavage and she was given activated charcoal and laxatives and was monitored. Her neurologic status was normal. By one hour after admitting this patient we started chelation therapy with Chelintox i.v. for 5 days. After a couple of days of therapy a blood lead level dropped sharply. Gradually her gastrointestinal problems start to disappear with no dysfunction of central nervous system.

During serious acute lead poisoning the main blood lead level correlated only with gastrointestinal symptoms. In literature there are described cases when death was caused by a blood lead level of 7.5 – 19.5 mmol/l. Duration of a high blood lead level seems to be important. An early beginning of chelation therapy could prevent organs failure.