



Policy

Oakham School Medical Centre

Guidelines on Management of Pupils Intoxicated with Alcohol

Alcohol is a 'central nervous system' depressant and the more alcohol in the blood, the more the vital body functions are depressed. High levels of blood alcohol cause:

- **blood pressure, pulse and respirations to decrease**
- **skin to become pale, cool and clammy**
- **conscious level to be impaired**
- **nausea and vomiting**
- **drop in blood sugar**
- **pupils to be pinpoint**

If the medical centre is contacted about a pupil being intoxicated, the nurse must judge whether or not she needs to visit the pupil or whether the pupil can be brought straight to the medical centre.

If the nurse is informed that the pupil is unconscious, she should inform a member of staff to stay with the pupil at all times whilst an ambulance is called. The nurse should then (if possible) go to the patient and help monitor them until the ambulance arrives.

In all cases, the nurse should ascertain the **history** of the incident, should **examine** the pupil and **assess** what course of action to take next.

HISTORY Question pupil (if possible) and others around

- type and quantity of alcohol
- period over which alcohol consumed
- has pupil eaten recently
- has pupil taken drugs as well
- existing health conditions (eg. Diabetic or epileptic)
- has the pupil also sustained a fall with possible **head injury** or other injuries

EXAMINATION

- **conscious level** are they alert? Degree of balance?
do they respond to verbal questioning ? Clarity of speech?
do they respond to painful stimuli only (when shoulder shaken or sternum rubbed)?
are they completely unresponsive?
- **pupil size**
- **pulse / respiration** if either are lower than normal, suggestive of alcohol poisoning
- **testing of urine/ blood** look for sugar and ketones in urine, abnormal BM stix test

The three most common causes of death associated with acute alcohol intoxication are :

- vomit inhalation
- acute toxic hepatitis
- hypoglycaemia

ACTION

Conscious and alert pupils may be cared for in house or in the medical centre, depending on the state of the pupil and whether house staff are happy to stay with the pupils in house. Either way – the pupil must be observed for 4 hours. If at any time the condition of the pupil deteriorates, medical advice should be sought immediately.

The pupil should be laid down in the recovery position so that if they vomit, there is less chance of aspiration.

If allowed to go to sleep, the pupil should be woken up frequently and assessed. If in the medical centre, regular observations should be performed as above and any deterioration in pulse, breathing, response level or blood sugar would indicate transferring to hospital in an ambulance immediately.

If pupils are conscious and alert, fluids may be given but vomiting must not be induced. Do not give any medication until the pupil is fully recovered.

If the pupil is aggressive, seek the help of another member of staff.

Transfer to hospital in an ambulance is advisable if, the pupil is :

- **unconscious or very difficult to rouse**
- **vital signs such as breathing or pulse begin to drop**
- **there is any suspicion of a head injury**
- **there is any underlying health problem of significance (eg diabetes, epilepsy, heart or liver problem, etc)**
- **there is any suspicion of pupil having taken drugs as well**

Unconscious pupils should be placed in the recovery position and carefully monitored until the ambulance arrives.

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SJBesant