

Ministry of Health

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September 2, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: Health Care Providers and Public Health Units

FROM: Dr. Kieran M. Moore
Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario

RE: Aconitine Poisoning

Dear colleagues:

I am writing to notify all healthcare providers and local public health units that the Ministry of Health is closely monitoring the situation concerning aconitine poisoning cases reported in Ontario this week. I am urging all healthcare providers to be alert for patients presenting with symptoms that are consistent with aconitine poisoning.

On Sunday, August 28, 2022, eleven ill individuals sought medical care at emergency departments or hospitals in York Region after consuming a chicken meal that was seasoned with a sand ginger product contaminated with aconite. Five individuals were admitted to the ICU. The ill individuals presented with different symptoms varying from numbness in face, numbness in extremities, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and the more severe cases with complications of arrhythmia.

Aconite is a plant also known as monkshood, wolf's bane and aconitum. Its roots are used in traditional Chinese medicine and must be processed prior to use to neutralize the toxin; It can otherwise be toxic to the individual. All eleven ill individuals consumed food prepared with one brand of sand ginger powder (also known as keampferia galanga) that was found to be contaminated with Aconite. You can find the CFIA recall information here: [Mr. Right brand Keampferia Galanga Powder \(sand ginger powder\) recalled due to aconitine contamination - Canada.ca](https://www.inspection.gc.ca/eng/food-products/unsafe-unsafe/2022/08/22/20220822-0001)

Individuals who ingest Aconite, can become symptomatic within minutes to one hour after ingestion. Symptoms include:

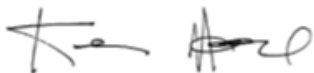
- Numbness and tingling sensation on lips, tongue, face and extremities
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Headache
- Arrhythmia and heart related complications

Should an individual present with these signs or symptoms, please be sure to:

- Take a thorough food history in your clinical assessments specifically inquiring about spice consumption
- Note the symptom onset can be within minutes to one hour
- Collect blood and urine samples should clinical presentation and clinical history be consistent with this toxidrome
- Notify your local public health unit for further investigation
- Contact Poison Control for toxicological assessment and exposure management at: 1-800-268-9017

We will keep you apprised of developments related to this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kieran Moore'.

Kieran Michael Moore, MD, CCFP(EM), FCFP, MPH, DTM&H, FRCPC

Chief Medical Officer of Health