

Chemical Residual Removal for Children Associated With Clandestine Methamphetamine Laboratories - April 2006

Recommendations of the Medical/Scientific Committee, National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children

A wide variety of solvents, acids, bases, iodine, phosphorus, phosphine gas, anhydrous ammonia, methamphetamine and other compounds may be present at a clandestine methamphetamine laboratory. These cannot be accurately measured and may be present on children who live in or visit these premises. To safely deal with contamination AND minimize additional trauma, these guidelines are recommended:

When a child is found at the location of a clandestine lab:

**Injury or
Medical
Distress**

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT ALWAYS TAKES PRECEDENCE over decontamination.

- If injured or in distress, TRANSPORT IMMEDIATELY for emergency care.
- REMOVE CHEMICALS WITH A SOAPY SHOWER as soon as safely possible.

**Evident
Significant
Chemical
Exposure**

When chemical odor, wetness, visible chemical, etc. indicate significant exposure:

- Remove clothes and provide warm soapy shower in non-threatening situation.
- * Shower at scene if possible without trauma to child
- Otherwise change clothes and transport to child-friendly situation
- Clothes should be left at scene for disposition by law enforcement personnel.
- Baby wipes are NOT an adequate substitute for a warm, soapy shower.

**Child
Found in
Lab with
No
Symptoms**

When contamination is not evident, danger to contacts of the child is not likely.

However, significant contamination is possible; exposures should be minimized.

- Remove clothes and shower as soon as reasonably safe and non-traumatic.
- Define procedure and location with local protocol.
- Protect against further spread with barrier (cloth draped over vehicle seats, etc.)
- Hot water wash may adequately clean clothes but safe discard is suggested.
- Throughout the process, keep child warm; avoid hypothermia.

When exposed child is not home but is in school, daycare, etc.
the child should be visited by appropriate agency to determine:

**Appears
Ill or
Contam-
inated**

BASIC LIFE SUPPORT ALWAYS TAKES PRECEDENCE over decontamination.

- TRANSPORT IMMEDIATELY to Medical Care
- REMOVE CHEMICALS WITH SOAPY SHOWER A.S.A.P.
- Unlikely situation because will already be identified by school or agency personnel.

**In School
or Daycare
with NO
Symptoms**

When contamination NOT evident, danger to contacts of the child is NOT LIKELY and full and immediate decontamination is not necessary.

However, contamination is possible and exposures should be minimized.

- Remove clothes and shower as soon as reasonably safe and non-traumatic.
- Define procedure and location (on site, hospital, fire station, etc.) with local protocol.
- Protect against further spread with barrier (cloth draped over vehicle seats, etc.)
- Hot water wash may adequately clean clothes but safe discard is suggested.
- UNLESS THERE IS EVIDENCE OF CONTAMINATION OF OTHER CHILDREN (odors, illness, etc.) NO CLEANING or DECONTAMINATION OF OTHERS needed.
- Extraordinary cleaning of school or daycare property is NOT needed.

All children should have a thorough medical AND developmental assessment before or after showering.