

Chief Health Officer Alert

6 January 2012

Status: Active

Mushroom poisoning – health warning

Status: Active
Date issued: 6 January 2012
Issued by: Dr Rosemary Lester, Chief Health Officer, Victoria
Issued to: Consumers

Key messages

- Two people have died recently after eating death cap mushrooms.
- Death cap mushrooms are extremely poisonous, one mushroom can kill an adult.
- There is no test to determine safe from poisonous mushrooms so if in doubt, don't eat.
- If you suspect poisoning, don't wait, call the Poisons Information Centre immediately on 131 126
- Mushrooms bought from a supermarket, greengrocer or other reputable source are safe to eat.

Take care when picking mushrooms

Extreme caution is advised when picking and consuming wild mushrooms following the recent deaths of two people who consumed Death Cap mushrooms (*Amanita Phalloides*).

Death Cap mushrooms are extremely poisonous – one mushroom is sufficient to kill an adult. They are typically found growing near oak trees and are sometimes mistaken for common field mushrooms or edible south-east Asian or European mushrooms, Cooking, peeling or drying these mushrooms does not remove or inactivate the poison.

What do these mushrooms look like?

Death Cap mushrooms grow under oak trees and are 40-160mm in diameter. The cap ranges in colour from pale yellow green to olive brown and the ridges on the underside of the cap are white. The base of the stem has a membrane 'cup'.

What are the symptoms of poisoning?

Symptoms can include violent stomach pains, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Symptoms may subside after one or two days but this does not indicate recovery. Serious liver damage may well have occurred that may result in death.

What to do if you suspect poisoning

The sooner treatment can begin, the better the chances of survival. Onset of symptoms is anywhere from six to 24 hours after ingestion so if it is suspected that you or your child have eaten these mushrooms, it is critical that you do not wait for symptoms to occur before seeking medical assistance.

Provide a sample of the mushroom consumed if possible to ensure it is properly identified.

Contact the Victorian Poisons Information Centre immediately on 131126

There is no home test available to distinguish safe and edible from poisonous versions of mushrooms so if in doubt, don't consume.

Mushrooms purchased from a supermarket, greengrocer or other reputable source are safe to eat.

More information

- [Fungi poisoning – Better Health Channel](#)
- [Death cap mushroom fact sheet - Australian National Botanic Gardens](#)
<http://www.anbg.gov.au/fungi/deathcap.html>

Contacts

- Poisons Information Centre on 131 126

Yours sincerely



Dr Rosemary Lester
Chief Health Officer

Authorised by the Victorian Government, Melbourne.