

Subject: Scope of Practice/Procedure –ALS  
**Activated Charcoal**

Associated Policies: 5402, 5419, 5421, 6524

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- I. Class
  - A. Absorbent.
  
- II. Indications
  - A. Acute management of many oral poisonings.
  
- III. Therapeutic Effects
  - A. Binds with drugs and chemicals within GI tract and decreases intestinal absorption in the overdose situation thereby preventing toxicity.
  - B. The poison and charcoal compound is then excreted from the body.
  
- IV. Contraindications
  - A. Absolute:
    - 1. Do not use Activated Charcoal with Sorbitol.
  - B. Relative:
    - 1. Decreasing level of consciousness unless intubated prior to administration.
    - 2. Ingestion or poisonings due to:
      - a. Cyanide.
      - b. Corrosives.
      - c. Petroleum distillates.
  
- V. Adverse Effects
  - A. Vomiting.
  - B. Constipation.
  - C. Black stools.
  
- VI. Administration and Dosage
  - A. Adult:
    - 1. 50 Gm of Activated Charcoal and water to form a slurry to facilitate delivery. Administer via PO, OG, or NG routes.
  - B. Pediatric:
    - 1. > 35 kg: 1 Gm/kg of Activated Charcoal and water to form a slurry to facilitate delivery. Administer via PO, OG, or NG routes.
    - 2. < 35 kg: 1 Gm/kg of Activated Charcoal premixed with water to form a slurry to facilitate delivery. Administer via PO, OG, or NG routes.

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VII. Special Information

- A. Other medications will be absorbed by charcoal.
- B. Shake container vigorously for a minimum of thirty (30) seconds.
- C. Charcoal binds with the “volume” of toxic ingested. Even small amounts of charcoal successfully administered may be helpful to prevent a lethal ingestion. If quantity of ingestion is known, may consider formula of ten (10) times the ingested dose of toxin by weight for pediatric patients.
- D. Will not bind with alcohol, heavy metal (e.g. iron, lead) or lithium.

Approved: 

Approved as to Form: 