

# Cyanide (HCN) Exposure

Consider treatment for any patient with altered mental status or unresponsive after smoke inhalation, fire, combustion, or after known exposure to cyanide compound

## Signs and Symptoms of CN Toxicity

- Headache
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Nausea/vomiting
- Flu-like illness
- Flushed skin
- Tachycardia
- Syncope

## Severe Symptoms

- Altered mental status
- Seizures
- Cardiac arrest

**Note: Symptoms of CO & CN toxicity are the same!**  
**\*co-exposure can occur\***

Routine HAZMAT & Medical Care  
(scene safety/PPE/decontamination)

**Oxygen 15L/min** via NRB or BVM

If altered mental status present:  
refer to **Altered Mental Status** protocol  
to consider all possible etiologies

Measure SpCO  
If SpCO Reading > 5%:  
treat as per **Carbon Monoxide** protocol

High suspicion of CN toxicity  
with severe symptoms?

No

- Continue **Oxygen 15 L**
- Monitor for deterioration

If hypotension present:  
treat as per **Shock** protocol

Consider CN toxicity  
especially in patients  
whose burns do not  
explain how critical  
they are!

<sup>3</sup> Begin CPR immediately if the patient is in cardiac arrest.