



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

**National Health Service in Scotland
Management Executive**

Dear Colleague

NATIONAL POISONS INFORMATION SERVICE

Summary

1. This guidance
 - a. describes poisons information services in the United Kingdom, including tablet and capsule identification;
 - b. strongly encourages access by Accident and Emergency Departments to the poisons information database TOXBASE.
 - c. replaces Scottish Hospital Memoranda 1963/72 and 1965/46.

Action

2. Units and Trusts providing Accident and Emergency Services should ensure that, when required, they have ready access to specialist information to assist with diagnosis, treatment and management of patients who have been, or are suspected of having been, poisoned.

Information is accessible on-line via Viewdata (TOXBASE) and by telephone.

Diagnostic and treatment information is available from the Scottish Poisons Information Bureau and from other Centres of the National Poisons Information Service.

A Tablet and Capsule Identification Service (TICTAC) is also available by telephone.

Yours sincerely

DAVID STEEL
Director of Administration

COMMON SERVICES AGENCY	
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**NHS:
MEL(1993)88**

St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

28 June 1993

Addressees

For action:
General Managers,
Health Boards

Chief Executives,
NHS Trusts

For information:
General Manager,
Common Services Agency

General Manager,
State Hospital

General Manager,
Health Education Board
for Scotland

To be copied to
Unit General Managers
for action

Enquiries to:

Miss Kathy Russell
HPPHD1/1
Room 54D/2
St Andrew's House
EDINBURGH EH1 3DE
Tel: 031 244-2507
Fax: 031 244-2846

ANNEX A

BACKGROUND

1. The Scottish Poisons Information Bureau in Edinburgh is part of the National Poisons Information Service: NPIS includes also Poisons Information Centres in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Tablet and Capsule Identification System (TICTAC).
2. The Poisons Information Centres have, for many years, provided a 24-hour enquiry service and currently handle over 140,000 enquiries per year. The Service is available to health care staff - primarily doctors in hospitals and in general practice - dealing with emergency care of patients who have been, or are suspected of having been poisoned; it is not available to the general public.
3. Information is available on-line to registered users from a database (TOXBASE), developed by the Scottish Poisons Information Bureau. The service is widely used in Scotland and Northern Ireland and its increased use within the UK is urged by the Health Departments. TOXBASE provides information about routine diagnosis, treatment and management of patients and information on very many substances and products - pharmaceuticals, household products and industrial and agricultural chemicals. TOXBASE offers ample information to assist with the proper treatment and management of the majority of cases. There is no charge for registration and telephone charges are usually at local rates.

Further information about TOXBASE, the equipment needed and arrangements for access are available from:

Mrs A Good
The Scottish Poisons Information Bureau
The Royal Infirmary
EDINBURGH
EH3 9YW
Telephone (office hours) 031-228 6907

4. More detailed information and advice is available at all times by telephone from the Poisons Information Centres. Addresses and telephone numbers are given in Annex B.
5. The Scottish Poisons Information Bureau uses TICTAC to assist in the identification of tablets, capsules and other items of similar appearance. This service is available from the Scottish Poisons Information Bureau and from St George's Hospital, London. The address and telephone number are given in Annex B.

ANNEX B

POISONS INFORMATION CENTRES

Scotland Scottish Poisons Information Bureau Telephone: 031-229 2477
The Royal Infirmary
EDINBURGH
EH3 9YW

England Poisons Unit Telephone: 071-635 9191
Avonley Road or via Guy's Hospital -
LONDON 071-955 5095
SE14 5ER

West Midlands Poisons Unit Telephone: 021-554 3801
Dudley Road Hospital
BIRMINGHAM
B18 7QH

The General Infirmary Telephone: 0532-430715
Great George Street or: 0532-316838
LEEDS
LS1 3EX

Regional Drug and Therapeutics Centre Telephone: 091-232 1525
Wolfson Unit (office hours)
Claremont Place or: 091-232 5131
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE (out of hours)
NE1 4LP

Wales Welsh National Poisons Unit Telephone: 0222-70991
Ward West 5
Llandough Hospital
Penarth
CARDIFF
CF6 1XX

TABLET AND CAPSULE IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM

Scotland Scottish Poisons Information Bureau Telephone: 031-229 2477
The Royal Infirmary
EDINBURGH
EH3 9YW

England The Toxicology Unit Telephone: 081-784 2627
St George's Hospital Medical School
Cranmer Terrace
LONDON
SW17 0RE