

## Jimson Weed

The Maryland Poison Center receives a number of calls each Fall about Jimson weed (*Datura stramonium*) exposures, usually in teens looking for a no-cost, easily accessible, hallucinogenic high. Other common names for jimson weed include devil's weed, stinkweed, locoweed, thornapple, Angel's trumpet, and Devil's trumpet. Jimson weed grows along roadsides, in pastures and in vacant lots throughout Maryland, reaching 3 to 5 feet in height. The plant has purple or white trumpet- or funnel-shaped flowers and prickly seed pods which split along 4 seams to reveal numerous small brown or black seeds. Poisonings from this plant are often seen in the Fall, when the plant reaches maturity. The seeds and dried leaves of jimson weed are ingested directly from the plant or in a tea, or smoked, to deliberately produce delirium and hallucinations.



All parts of the plant contain atropine, hyoscyamine and scopolamine. Exposure to these alkaloids produces anticholinergic effects, appearing within 30-100 minutes after ingesting jimsonweed seeds. The clinical effects include dilated pupils, diminished bowel sounds, urinary retention, dry skin and mucus membranes, flushed skin, tachycardia, hypertension, hyperthermia, agitation, delirium, hallucinations and seizures.

Most cases of jimson weed intoxication respond to basic supportive care. Activated charcoal can be given for recent ingestions if the patient is awake and able to protect his/her airway. Benzodiazepines may be used for agitation or seizures. Drugs with anticholinergic properties should be avoided (e.g., atropine, antihistamines, haloperidol). Physostigmine is a cholinesterase inhibitor that rapidly crosses the blood brain barrier resulting in reversal of anticholinergic effects. The use of physostigmine should be limited to severely affected patients, and **only with poison center consultation** due to the risk of seizures, bradycardia and dysrhythmias. If administered, long lasting reversal of signs and symptoms is generally not achieved because of the relatively short duration of action of physostigmine.

Call the Maryland Poison Center for assistance in managing suspected cases of jimson weed intoxication.

### ***DID YOU KNOW THAT... Motherisk is a resource for questions about drug safety during pregnancy and breastfeeding?***

The Motherisk program at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto provides information on the safety of medications, illicit drugs, chemicals, personal products and more during pregnancy and breastfeeding. There is a wealth of information, resources and references for health professionals and the public on their website, [www.motherisk.org](http://www.motherisk.org). Motherisk also operates telephone helplines to answer questions. New information such as a recent Motherisk advisory on the risks of using codeine during breastfeeding can also be found on the website.



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