

# Queensland Drug Warning

## Emerging Drugs Network Australia (Qld)

### Severe toxicity after ingesting poppy seed tea

Several cases of severe toxicity after consuming poppy seed tea have recently presented to various hospitals in southeast Queensland.

Some of the patients reported that the poppy seed brew had a bitter taste and was much darker in colour than usual.



Toxic effects have only been observed when poppy seeds have been consumed in concentrated forms such as tea. Toxic effects are not expected when using poppy seeds for intended culinary uses such as in baked goods.

There is potentially high thebaine content in poppy seeds that results in thebaine poisoning. You cannot tell which poppy seeds have high thebaine content by looking at the seeds.

#### Toxic effects

Presentations have had unexpected features including:

- dizziness
- muscle pain
- muscle spasm and rigidity
- muscle breakdown (rhabdomyolysis)
- seizures
- cardiac arrest.

#### Information and Advice

**Seek medical attention immediately if you experience any toxic effects following drug use**

**For help:**

- **Call Triple Zero (000) for emergency assistance**
- **Go to your nearest emergency department**
- **Call the Queensland Poisons Information Centre (13 11 26).**

*This information is not intended for public distribution due to the risk of increase misuse of this product. The intended target audience for this information is at risk populations and the services that may interact with this target population. Please use discretion in circulating this information.*

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