

Title	IMDG Code 2016 / SUPPLEMENT / MFAG / Table 15
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Note	Incorporating Amendment 35-10

TABLE 15

CHEMICAL-INDUCED JAUNDICE

Jaundice refers to the yellow discoloration of the skin and eyes. The condition can be caused by liver disease or the breakdown of red blood cells (haemolysis).

LIVER DISEASE

The liver is the chemical factory where the body attempts to destroy all poisons. The most common cause of liver injury is the excessive intake of ethyl alcohol. Infectious agents can also cause liver disease (hepatitis) and jaundice.

The liver can rarely be damaged by certain chemicals, e.g. chlorinated hydrocarbons, metal salts and phosphorus.

Chemical-induced liver injury does not show itself until two to three days after poisoning.

In severe cases, rapid and progressive failure of the liver can lead to increasing drowsiness followed by loss of consciousness and death after several days.

HAEMOLYSIS

Haemolysis of red blood cells can occur when there is either mechanical destruction of the cells (e.g. in certain heart conditions) or in certain types of blood disorders. Rarely, haemolysis can also result from overexposure to certain chemicals. There is no specific therapy of haemolysis on board a marine vessel but potential complications of kidney disfunction due to the heavy overload of haemolytic products should be mitigated by high fluid intake. Urine output should be closely monitored.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Yellowing of skin and eyes; pain or tenderness in the right upper abdomen; urine becomes dark brown, and the stool pale in colour

TREATMENT

• RADIO FOR MEDICAL ADVICE.

- The casualty should be transferred to a shore hospital as soon as possible.
- The casualty should rest in bed and be kept warm.
- Although the casualty may be feeling sick, he should be encouraged to take a high-carbohydrate diet in the form of liquids and bread. Liquids should contain at least two teaspoonfuls of sugar in a glass of water every two hours.
- No drugs should be given unless there is severe vomiting, in which case give 10 mg metoclopramide intramuscularly; repeat two hours later if vomiting persists.
- Alcoholic beverages should be completely avoided until on-shore clinical evaluation is obtained.

FOLLOW-UP

If there is a rapid onset of the symptoms and signs, associated with drowsiness or coma, then the damage is likely to be severe: **RADIO FOR MEDICAL ADVICE**. Arrange for evacuation. The casualty will need to be transferred to a shore hospital as soon as possible.