

Sidra Medicine Launches Toxicology Services

Qatar Foundation entity committed to national health safety with the launch of a poison helpline and training programs

Sidra Medicine, Qatar's specialist women's and children's hospital, announced the expansion of its Emergency Medicine services with the launch of its clinical toxicology services. This includes a poison helpline, training workshops and courses and introduction of multiple new poison antidotes.

The initiatives are part of Sidra Medicine's efforts to treat poisonings and poison exposures for patients nationwide and support Qatar's healthcare networks in preparedness for toxicology related incidents.

The Qatar Poison Center is a free call center service by Sidra Medicine's Department of Emergency Medicine. The helpline provides poisoning management and treatment advice for both children and adults.

This helpline is open to the general public and hospitals. It accepts calls in English and Arabic on 4003 1111 from 9.00 am to 01.00 am seven days a week. Callers will receive expert and timely poisoning management advice over the phone from pharmacists and physicians with training and expertise in clinical toxicology.

Dr. Khalid Al-Ansari, Sidra Medicine's Chairman of Emergency Medicine, said, "Every year globally, emergency departments have visits by frantic patients and parents who are worried that they or their child have been poisoned. Often, ER visits after poison exposures are unnecessary, but sometimes they are lifesaving. People can call our free helpline and receive information and advice about a poison exposure. They will be advised what to do at home, and whether a visit to an emergency department is needed. As with poison centers in North America, UK, and Australia, our services are for both adults and children of all ages. The service is based on best practice models that have been successfully applied in North America. We are proud to bring this level of service and expertise to Qatar."

The Qatar Poison Center can help with questions about exposure to or poisoning with household products; chemicals at work or in the environment; drugs (prescription, over-the-counter, or herbal medicines); gases and fumes; and all envenomations such as snake bites, scorpion sting, spider bites, and jellyfish stings.

As part of its goal of preparedness and improving poison related assistance and care, Sidra Medicine has brought in new antidotes that were previously unavailable in Qatar or the GCC. It will also house antidotes to treat a wide variety of poisonings including radioactive isotope exposures. In addition to this, the healthcare organization will participate in a new antidote-sharing program, where new, costly, or infrequently-needed antidotes will be available for patients at other hospitals in Qatar.

To support Qatar's capacity to respond to radiological, chemical and HAZMAT (hazardous materials) incidents, Sidra Medicine will also be hosting a series of cutting-edge courses and training programs.

Endorsed by the American College of Medical Toxicology, the courses are scheduled for the first quarter of 2019, and will cover Radiological Incidents & Terrorism, Chemical Terrorism, and Advanced HAZMAT Life Support. More details will be shared in the new year.

Sidra Medicine's Department of Emergency Medicine is collaborating with the Medical Education department to offer clinical toxicology training for physicians, pharmacists, medical students, and pharmacy students and other trainees. The first trainees are scheduled to begin at Sidra Medicine in March 2019.

Dr. Khalid Al Ansari, explained, "We are making great strides in developing and advancing Qatar's healthcare offering. The development of our clinical toxicology services and programs is a testament to our goal to provide comprehensive services as a healthcare provider. Our toxicology services are not just for our patients but has been extended to support the safety and well-being of people of all ages throughout the entire country. We look forward to working closely with our partners in Qatar's healthcare network in our ongoing commitment to keep patients and families safe and well cared for."

The Qatar Poison Center helpline does not replace 999 emergency services. In the case of a medical emergency, immediate danger, or need for critical medical attention, calling 999 is recommended.

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About Sidra Medicine

Sidra Medicine provides specialized healthcare to women, children, and young people from Qatar and around the world.

Established by Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, Sidra Medicine embraces best practice medical education, innovative biomedical and clinical research and discovery, and exceptional patient and family focused care.

Sidra Medicine provides comprehensive specialist healthcare services for children and young people, as well as maternity and gynecology care for women. Some of its unique children's specialist services include Cardiology, Neurology, Urology and Plastics & Craniofacial Reconstruction. It is also treats and cares for pregnant women with fetal complications.

The ultramodern healthcare organization is a testament to Qatar's pioneering spirit and sustained commitment to its human and social development.

To access Sidra Medicine services, and learn more about our contribution to global healthcare, education and research, please visit www.sidra.org.