



TOXTALKS

A BULLETIN FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS WHO MANAGE POISONED PATIENTS

Blue Ridge Poison Center

University of Virginia Health System

January 2020

Unregulated Supplement 'V8' Implicated in Hospitalizations

In August of 2019, the Blue Ridge Poison Center received a call concerning a patient experiencing repetitive episodes of hypoglycemia following ingestion of a supplement pill marketed as "V8". Over the following month, twelve other cases of marked hypoglycemia requiring hospitalization after V8 usage were reported. Most patients presented with blood glucose levels less than 30 mg/dL, with one patient experiencing a glucose level of 11 mg/dL. In addition to dextrose infusions, a number of other interventions were trialed including octreotide, steroids, and even hemodialysis.

The Central Virginia Health District in association with the University of Virginia conducted an investigation and discovered that the V8 supplement was sold in multiple gas stations and convenience stores. Samples of V8 were obtained and tablets were analyzed by Liquid Chromatography Quantitative Time of Flight mass spectrometry (LC-QTOF) at the University of Virginia Medical Laboratories. Analysis of the V8 pills revealed that each contained glyburide, a sulfonylurea oral hypoglycemic used in the treatment of diabetes and associated with prolonged hypoglycemia following overdose.

A public health investigation was conducted, and all of the cases reported to the Blue Ridge Poison Center met the confirmed case definition of exposure to V8 associated with severe hypoglycemia in the setting of no prior history of diabetes or ingestion of a drug to control glucose. In order to stem this outbreak, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) worked to remove V8 from the stores at known locations. Multiple public service announcements were released and other nearby poison centers were notified. It is unclear why a sulfonylurea was placed in this product.

Continued other side

NEWS AND NOTES:

BRPC Staff Receive 'HOOS Building Bridges' Award

University of Virginia President Jim Ryan recently awarded 13 staff members "HOOS Building Bridges" awards for their work connecting UVA students, members of the faculty and staff, and the broader Charlottesville community. Among the recipients were Blue Ridge Poison Center Director Christopher Holstege, MD, and Associate Director Heather Borek, MD. Drs. Holstege and Borek worked with a team to develop "Observe," an initiative that is making it easier for undergraduate students interested in health care to shadow UVA clinicians.

[>>Read the story](#)



Dr. Holstege and Dr. Borek are in the back row, left and center.

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Supplements unregulated by the FDA may contain ingredients not listed on labeling and can pose a significant health risk to consumers who erroneously believe supplements to be harmless. The product sold as “V8” supplement contains glyburide and use of this product could lead to potentially life-threatening episodes of hypoglycemia requiring prolonged hospitalization or result in death.

This investigation revealed a specific instance of unregulated supplements sold at public convenience stores containing an unlabeled and potentially harmful ingredient. These cases also highlighted the importance of the role of collaboration between the local poison center, the local hospital, the local health department, and the state university health system for public health surveillance, detection, and response. However, numerous unregulated products still remain on the market, putting consumers at risk.



'V8' vial and tablet. (Image courtesy of the Blue Ridge Poison Center)

If questions arise on this or any other poisoning, the medical staff at the Blue Ridge Poison Center would be happy to assist. Free medical consult is available 24 hours a day, every day: 1-800-222-1222. (Healthcare providers may also call 1-800-451-1428). If odd cases present that may represent a poisoning, please notify the poison center so that we can help determine if it is a sentinel case and to release warnings as quickly as possible to other healthcare providers and the public in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health.

The Blue Ridge Poison Center receives funding from the University of Virginia Health System, the Virginia Department of Health, and the U.S. Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA). We are accredited by the American Association of Poison Control Centers. We've been proudly serving the Commonwealth since 1978.

Poison safety tips, free materials, & more:

