CHARCOAL AN ANTIDOTE FOR CHEMICAL AND FOOD POISONING

by:
Onofre M. Aquino Jr.
T-III, Pagalanggang National High School, Dinalupihan, Bataan

Charcoals are commonly found in our cooking area, kitchen, refrigerators as odor absorbent. How did we know that charcoal can do these wonders?

Charcoals are made of carbon. Carbons are known for having the ability to absorb. The main use of charcoal is for outdoor cooking. Its second main use is for industrial applications in its other form - activated charcoal.

Charcoal is neither absorbed in the GI tract nor metabolized. Because of its large surface area, it absorbs chemicals in the stomach and digestive tract, trapping the chemicals and expelling them out of the body without allowing them to be absorbed into the blood.

French chemist Bertrand, carried out some of the first systematic studies on charcoal. In 1813 he showed his point by ingesting 5 grams or a teaspoonful of arsenic trioxide, which is more than 150 times the amount that would kill a person. This was mixed with a large amount of charcoal powder. He survived without any ill effects.

In 1830, a pharmacist named PF Towry performed a similar demonstration before the French Academy of Medicine. He swallowed one gram of strychnine (ten times the lethal dose) mixed with 15 grams of finely ground charcoal. He, too lived without any ill effects.

Charcoal has been used as an effective absorbent of poison taken orally. In an experiment with dogs and cats. A proportion of five parts charcoal to one part of aspirin is effective against a number of other drugs.
An experiment conducted on human beings by Levy and Tsuchiyn revealed that 50 grams of activated charcoal was much effective in absorbing 5 grams of aspirin than 10 grams of charcoal which absorbed only 1 gram of aspirin. Charcoal was considered an antidote for most cases of poisoning, snake bites, insect stings and food poisoning.

With these findings and information, we should be well aware that it pays to have charcoal in our homes, be it a common charcoal or an activated one.

References:

The Healing Wonders of Charcoal by Severino Paypa, MHSC MPH

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