



French Directorate General for Health

Paris, 9 November 2018

Press release

An increase in poisonings due to wild mushroom consumption: be vigilant!

In response to an increase in the number of cases of poisonings due to wild mushroom consumption reported to the French Poison Control and Monitoring Centres (CAP-TV), ANSES and the Directorate General for Health (DGS) are issuing a warning to wild mushroom gatherers and reminding them of the good practices to be observed.

Although the weather conditions in September and the first half of October (dry, high temperatures) were not conducive to the growth of wild mushrooms, the cooler and wetter conditions of the past two weeks have been more favourable, and the number of poisoning cases observed has consequently increased sharply.

Whereas from July to mid-October, the poison control centres recorded between 5 and 60 cases a week, a total of 249 poisoning cases have been recorded in the past two weeks.

This type of poisoning can have serious health consequences (severe digestive disorders, liver damage that may require a transplant) and can even be fatal. Seven serious cases have been recorded since July 2018, four of which were in the past two weeks.

In most cases, these poisonings result from confusion with other edible mushrooms, hence the importance of vigilance, both for connoisseurs and occasional pickers.

In response to these cases, which are regularly observed year after year, ANSES and the DGS reiterate the main recommendations:

- Only pick mushrooms that you know very well: some highly poisonous fungi closely resemble edible species;
- If you have the slightest doubt about the condition or identification of any of the mushrooms you have picked, do not consume any until you have had them checked by a specialist. You can seek advice from a pharmacist or local mycology associations and societies;
- Only pick specimens in good condition and take the entire mushroom (stalk and cap), to facilitate identification;
- Avoid picking mushrooms near polluted sites (roadsides, industrial zones, landfills);
- Carefully separate the harvested mushrooms according to species to avoid mixing pieces of poisonous fungi with edible mushrooms;

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- place mushrooms separately in a box or crate and never in a plastic bag, which accelerates their decomposition;
- Wash your hands thoroughly after picking;
- Store the mushrooms separately in suitable conditions in the refrigerator, and consume within no more than two days of picking;
- Consume wild mushrooms in reasonable quantities after cooking them thoroughly, and never eat them raw;
- Never feed the wild mushrooms you have picked to young children.

A valuable reflex is to take photos of your mushrooms before cooking! In the event of poisoning, the photo will help the pharmacist or doctor at the poison control centre decide on suitable treatment.

If one or more symptoms should appear

(mainly diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea, trembling, dizziness, vision problems, etc.)
following consumption of wild mushrooms:

**immediately dial "15" (in France) or call the [Poison Control Centre](#) in your region,
and explain that you have eaten mushrooms.**

Symptoms generally start to appear within 12 hours of consumption, and the condition of the patient may deteriorate rapidly.

In the event of symptoms, it is useful to note the times of the last meals and of the onset of the first symptoms, and to keep any leftovers from the harvest for identification.

ANSES conducts seasonal monitoring of poisonings due to wild mushrooms using data from the poison control centres.

Useful links:

French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety:
<https://www.anses.fr/fr/system/files/InfographieChampignons.pdf>

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health: <http://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/sante-et-environnement/denrees-alimentaires/article/prevention-des-intoxications-par-les-champignons#>

French Mycological Society: www.mycofrance.fr

Association of Poison Control and Monitoring Centres: www.centres-antipoison.net

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