

Poisons are an integral part of the *Dark Sun* campaign setting, from the class abilities of bards and traders, to the special attacks of certain monsters, and the nefarious skills of unscrupulous alchemists. Traditionally, poisons follow the standard rules for *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* 2nd Edition, with most dealing damage or occasionally paralyzing the target. Other editions of D&D have proposed different approaches to handling poison, as have many fans and game designers over the years.

This blog details the system we're using in our *To Tame A Land* campaign, which mixes the standard poisons of 2e with some other effects, drawing inspiration from other sources. Larry DiTillio's excellent article "Poison: The Toxins of Cerilon" from way back in *Dragon* magazine #59 was a very useful source and a couple of the poison types use names from his article as a tribute to his work.

Included below are alternate rules for using poison in your *Dark Sun* game, along with a revised Poison Table for use by bards and traders. Note that lethal poisons are now gained at higher levels within each delivery method category, smoothing out the balance of those classes somewhat.

Poison

Poisons are readily available in most cities and larger settlements, and are not necessarily illegal. Poisons are divided into Contact, Ingested, and Injury delivery methods, with different onset times and Strengths, with a letter class for use by the DM.

A dose of poison will coat two small weapons or one medium weapon, while two doses are required to coat a large weapon. Each dose lasts 24 hours unless crafted by a poison master (a bard of 10th level or higher). Such poisons last 72 hours and cost five times the listed price if purchased.

Poison placed on weapons evaporates with use. The first hit deals full poison damage and its effects last their full duration. The second hit deals half damage and any effects have their duration halved as the poison starts to evaporate. From the third hit onwards, the poison is ineffective.

Partially evaporated or used injury poisons also grant victims a +4 on their save to resist the poison's effects - so while a lethal poison will still be lethal on the second strike, victims of that lethal poison save at +4 because it is partially evaporated.



When using poison, most characters have a 5% chance of poisoning themselves and grants victims a +2 bonus on saving throws to resist the poison. Bards and traders, however, never run this risk and poisons administered by them do not grant a saving throw bonus.

Poisons come in different strengths. See the poisons table below for details. Listed poisons are full-strength. A **weak** version costs 3/4 the normal price and grants victims a +2 save bonus against the poison. A **very weak** version costs 1/2 the normal price and grants victims a +4 save bonus. A **strong** poison costs 5 times normal and imposes a -2 save penalty, and a **very strong** poison costs 10 times the normal price and imposes a -4 save penalty against the poison.

Poison deals the listed damage in hit points or imposes a special poison effect. Effects listed before the slash on the poisons table apply on a failed saving throw vs. poison and effects listed after the slash apply on a passed saving throw.

Poisons Table

This table is used by bards and traders – each time they gain a level, a bard or trader rolls 1d4, adds the result to their level, and consults the poisons table to determine which new poison they have learned. If the bard or trader has already learned the indicated poison, they gain no new poison but may alter a known poison so all saves against that poison are at -2. If the total is 30 or higher, the bard or trader may choose any poison on the list.

Poison Effects

- **Ability Damage:** The victim loses points from one ability score (chosen when the poison is crafted). Ability points return at the rate of one per day or through the use of a *restoration* spell or similar effect.
- **Blindness:** The victim is blinded for the listed duration.
- **Death:** The victim is killed outright.
- **Debilitation:** The victim's movement and ability scores are halved for 1d3 days and they cannot heal by any means until the poison is neutralized or its duration elapses.
- **Hallucination:** The victim is overcome by bewildering hallucinations – treat as the *confusion* spell for the duration.
- **Paralysis:** The victim is paralyzed for 2d6 rounds.
- **Sleep:** The victim falls asleep for the duration but can be woken normally.

POISONS REVISITED

Poisons Table

d4 + Level	Poison Class	Poison Varieties	Delivery Method	Onset Time	Strength	Crafting Cost	Market Cost
2	A	Cha'thrang Lime	Injury	1d3 x10 rounds	15/0	50 cp	100 cp
3	B	Megapede Venom, Widow's Bile	Injury	2d6 rounds	20/1d3	125 cp	250 cp
4	C	Barbed Scorpion Venom	Injury	1d4+1 rounds	25/2d4	200 cp	400 cp
5	D	Antloid Venom, Gold Scorpion Venom	Injury	1d2 rounds	30/2d6	375 cp	750 cp
6	O	Kank Venom, Mountain Spider Venom	Injury	2d12 rounds	Paralysis/0	100 cp	200 cp
7	P	Siltweed Extract	Injury	1d3 hours	Debilitation/0	100 cp	200 cp
8	Q	Bloodgrass Sap	Injury	Immediate	Paralysis/0	250 cp	500 cp
9	R	Tylatch Sap	Injury	Immediate	Sleep 2d4 hours/0	300 cp	600 cp
10	S	Valex Extract	Injury	1d2 rounds	1d2 ability damage/0	1,500 cp	3,000 cp
11	E	Silt Serpent Venom, Crystal Spider Venom, Dark Spider Queen Venom	Injury	Immediate	Death/20	1,000 cp	2,000 cp
12	F	Dark Spider Venom	Injury	Immediate	Death/0	750 cp	1,500 cp
13	J	Mulworm Slime	Injury	1d4 rounds	Death/20	1,000 cp	2,000 cp
14	G	Redleaf Sap	Ingested	2d6 hours	20/10	100 cp	200 cp
15	H	Kivit Musk	Ingested	1d4 hours	20/10	125 cp	250 cp
16	I	Desert Mastyril Extract	Ingested	2d6 rounds	30/15	250 cp	500 cp
17	T	Frailbud Powder	Ingested	1d4 rounds	Blindness 1d6 turns/0	150 cp	300 cp
18	U	Tylatch Powder	Ingested	1 round	Sleep 2d4 hours/0	150 cp	300 cp
19	V	Praka Weed	Ingested	1d4 rounds	Hallucinate 1d6 hours/0	500 cp	1,000 cp
20	W	Valex Crystals	Ingested	1d4 rounds	1d3 ability damage/0	1,500 cp	3,000 cp
21	J	Methelinoc, Mulworm Slime	Ingested	1d4 rounds	Death/20	1,000 cp	2,000 cp
22	K	Redleaf Paste	Contact	2d4 rounds	5/0	100 cp	200 cp
23	L	Bittershine Powder	Contact	2d4 rounds	10/0	150 cp	300 cp
24	A	Mulworm Slime	Contact	Immediate	15/0	150 cp	300 cp
25	M	Gray Root	Contact	1d4 rounds	20/5	250 cp	500 cp
26	X	Silver Lotus Pollen	Contact	1d4+1 rounds	Debilitation/0	1,500 cp	3,000 cp
27	Y	Praka Sap	Contact	1d3 rounds	Hallucinate 2d4 turns/0	400 cp	800 cp
28	Z	Valex Powder	Contact	Immediate	1d3 ability damage/0	2,000 cp	4,000 cp
29	N	Black Lotus Sap	Contact	1 round	Death/25	1,500 cp	3,000 cp
30+		Player's Choice					