



POISONING PREVENTION TIPS



Poisoning is now the leading cause of death from injuries in the United States (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics). It was found that in 2008, the number of poisoning deaths exceeded the number of motor vehicle traffic deaths for the first time in 30 years. A poison is any substance that can harm someone if it is used in the *wrong* way by the *wrong* person or in the *wrong* amount. A safe home environment is a unique challenge when there are children in the home.

The most common poisons among children are:

- cosmetics and personal care products
- cleaning substances
- pain medicine/fever-reducers
- coins, thermometers
- plants
- diaper care, acne preparations, antiseptics
- cough and cold preparations
- pesticides
- vitamins
- gastrointestinal preparations
- antimicrobials
- arts, crafts and office supplies
- antihistamines
- hormones and hormone antagonists (diabetes medications, contraceptives)
- hydrocarbons (lamp oil, kerosene, gasoline, lighter fluid)

Poison Prevention Week is March 17 through 23. Here are some tips from the national Poison Prevention Week Council:

General Safety Tips

- If you think someone has been poisoned, call **1-800-222-1222** to reach your local poison center. This national toll-free number works anywhere in the U.S. -- 24 hours a day. Keep this number near your phone, or program it into your phone, and inform babysitters. If the person has trouble breathing or is losing consciousness, call 911 also.
- Use Poison Prevention Week to inspect your home for proper storage of medicines or household products. Always store up high, away and out of sight of children.

Medicine

- Buy products in child-resistant packaging whenever possible. Use it properly by closing the container tightly after use.
- Install safety latches on cabinets used for medicines and household products.
- Avoid taking medicine in front of children.
- Tell children what medicine is and why you must be the one to give it to them. Never call medicine “candy” to get a child to take it.
- Clean out the medicine cabinet periodically, and safely dispose of medicines that are expired or no longer needed. Don’t flush. Follow disposal instructions on label.

- Monitor the use of medicines prescribed for children and teenagers, such as medicines for attention deficit disorder or ADD.

Lead

- More than 4% of children in US have lead poisoning. The most common cause of lead poisoning today is old paint with lead in it. If your child may have been exposed to lead, have your child tested. Symptoms of lead poisoning may not be obvious right away, but behavior and learning problems can develop if high levels are left untreated.

Carbon Monoxide

- Install a working carbon monoxide detector in your home, near or in bedrooms and close to furnaces or other gas consuming appliances.

Household Chemicals

- Keep antifreeze and all chemicals and household products in their original containers.
- Turn on fans and open windows when using household cleaners or other chemicals.
- NEVER use food containers such as cups or bottles to store household and chemical products.
- Don't smell chemical containers, whether you know what is inside or not.

Batteries

- Keep batteries out of a child's reach. Contact the poison center right away if a child swallows a battery or a battery is missing from a toy, card or other household item, no matter how small the battery. Properly dispose of old batteries after they have been removed from an appliance.