

Poison Prevention Tips

National Poison Prevention Week, the third week in March each year, is a week nationally designated to highlight the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them. However, every day people can and do prevent poisonings. We invite you to review the information on this site and become actively involved in helping ensure the safety of children and adults in your home and your community.

More than 2 million poisonings are reported each year to the 61 Poison Control Centers (PCCs) across the country. More than 90 percent of these poisonings occur in the home. The majority of non-fatal poisonings occur in children younger than six years old. And, poisonings are one of the leading causes of death among adults.

- All medications, whether prescription or over-the-counter, should have child-proof caps and be kept out of reach of children. If possible, put a lock or safety latch on your medicine cabinet.
- Prescription medications aren't the only thing in your bathroom that can be harmful to your children. Hair and skin products can also be dangerous if swallowed or inhaled. Keep them out of small children's reach.
- The medicine cabinet isn't the only place children find drugs. Many kids get them from their mother's purses. If you carry medications in your purse, make sure they have child-resistant closures.
- Never transfer prescription medications to other containers. You may forget what they are and the prescribed dosage. Keep all prescription medicines in original containers.
- Does your desk at home have glue, correction fluid or rubber cement in it? These could be harmful if swallowed. If you have small children, keep office products in locked storage.
- Not all poisons come in bottles. Plants can be poisonous too. Keep house plants out of small children's reach.
- When making your home safe from accidental poisonings, don't forget your garage. Keep automobile products, paints and paint solvents, and pesticides under lock and key and away from children.
- You say you don't have children? Do grandchildren or other kids sometimes come to visit your house? What about pets? Poison-proofing can save lives, even if you don't have small children.

Good Housekeeping Tips Prevent Accidental Poisonings

The Cincinnati Drug and Poison Information Center recommends these "good housekeeping rules" to prevent poisonings.

- Keep household chemical products and medicines out of youngsters' sight and locked up when not in use
- Store medicines separately from household products
- Store household cleaning products away from food products
- Keep items in their original containers
- Leave the original labels on all products and read the label before using
- Refer to medicine as "medicine" -- not "candy".
- Avoid taking medicines in front of children, since youngsters tend to imitate grown-ups

Poison-Proof Your Home

- Begin before your baby starts to crawl; get down on a child's level and crawl around your house, making sure all hazards are removed
- There is no such thing as a *child-proof* container; safety containers are only *child-resistant*, making them somewhat difficult to open but not impossible
- Store all potential poisons out of the reach and sight of children; keep products like insecticides, drain cleaners and medicines in a locked cabinet
- Children can open drawers as easily as cupboards; remove cosmetics, medication and other such items from bedside tables and low drawers
- Never let children be the first to open arriving mail or shopping containers
- Never leave purses that contain medicines and other potentially dangerous items unattended
- Never store food and household cleaning products together
- Never transfer products like kerosene, gasoline or household cleaning agents to another container, such as a soft drink bottle, cup or bowl that would attract a child or pet
- When discarding household products, rinse out the container and dispose of it in a covered trash can
- Always store medicines in their original containers, and discard medicines that are no longer used; rinse out empty containers

Poison-Proof Yourself

- Make sure you set a good example and establish good habits in the home and on the job.
- *Never* tell children medicine tastes like candy or that it is candy.
- Never take medicine when children are present. Children are imitators.
- Don't leave a child and a poison alone even "for a second".
- Don't take medicine in the dark or without reading the label.
- Don't leave purses unattended or available to curious children
- Don't mix household cleaning solutions, such as bleach and ammonia.
- Give medicine only to the person for whom it has been prescribed.
- Follow directions carefully when handling chemicals.
- Always be sure a teenage baby sitter has an adult to contact for help when parents are not available.
- Share this poison information with older siblings, baby sitters and relatives. Everyone has a part in preventing childhood poisonings.
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What to do if a poisoning occurs

1. Remain calm
2. Call 911 if you have a poison emergency and the victim has collapsed or is not breathing. If the victim is awake and alert, dial 1-800-222-1222. Try to have this information ready:
 - the victim's age and weight
 - the container or bottle of the poison if available
 - the time of the poison exposure
 - the address where the poisoning occurred
3. Stay on the phone and follow the instructions from the emergency operator or poison control center.

For more information contact your school nurse, or go to:

<http://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/svc/alpha/d/dpic/prevent/tips.htm>

<http://www.poisonprevention.org/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/poisonprevention.htm>

<http://www.poisoncentertampa.org/>