

TEST YOUR POISON SUMMER SAFETY IQ

School is out. Children and families are on the move. For many, summer is a favorite time of year—but children are at greater risk of poisoning. Families travel; medicines are left within reach; there are plants, critters, and chemicals in our yards. At the height of summer vacation season, poison centers in the United States answer more than 6600 poison emergency calls per day, a thousand more per day than in January.

Do you know what poison dangers to look out for during the summer months? Test your summer safety poison IQ with the following quiz developed by the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

You may not know the answer to all of these questions, but the experts at your local poison center do. For the first time ever, you can reach a local poison center, anywhere in the U.S., by calling a single toll-free number: 1-800-222-1222, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Callers are automatically connected to the closest poison center. Specially trained nurses, pharmacists, and doctors provide immediate treatment advice for poison emergencies. They also answer questions about poisons and poison prevention. The service is free and confidential.

TO TEST YOUR SUMMER SAFETY IQ, SELECT ONE ANSWER FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING TEN QUESTIONS.

- 1) You bought a tube of pain-relieving cream for the sunburn you got yesterday. You find your toddler sucking on the end of it. What should you do?
 - A. Nothing. Even if she swallowed some, it's just a little bit.
 - B. Check the tube to see if you need to buy some more.
 - C. Even a little bit of these creams can be dangerous. Call the poison center right away: 1-800-222-1222!

- 2) You've hacked out some underbrush for use as fire starter in the park's charcoal grill. Is this a good idea?
 - A. It's OK if your local fire marshal approves.
 - B. No, because it won't taste as good as hickory or mesquite.
 - C. No, if there's even a chance of poison ivy in there.

- 3) Your family is enjoying a camping trip with friends. A few people go hiking in the woods and bring back something that looks like a carrot. Should you put it in the campfire stew?
- A. Sure. Carrots taste great, and they're good for you, too.
 - B. Maybe. Nothing very poisonous grows in the woods.
 - C. Not unless there's an ambulance standing by!! That "carrot" could be hemlock, and eating it could be fatal.
- 4) A storm is coming and you run outside quickly to put the kids' bikes away. A snake bites you on your bare feet. What should you do?
- A. Find the snake and kill it.
 - B. Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222.
 - C. Since most snakes aren't poisonous, wait to see what happens.
- 5) You are at a neighborhood barbecue. Your youngster gets into some charcoal lighter fluid and you think he might have swallowed some. Is this dangerous?
- A. No, it's just a clear liquid.
 - B. It depends on how old your child is.
 - C. Yes. It can easily get into the lungs and cause pneumonia. This could be fatal.
- 6) You're outside spraying your lawn with insect killer when your daughter sneaks up behind you. You turn around in surprise—and your daughter gets that bug spray all over her skin. What should you do?
- A. Wash it for 15-20 minutes with running water. Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222.
 - B. Wait to see if she gets a rash.
 - C. Nothing. Garden chemicals are only poisonous if swallowed.
- 7) You're at a family picnic. Your two-year-old son decides to drink from that frosty pink pitcher of alcoholic punch. What should you do?
- A. Call the poison center right away at 1-800-222-1222. Alcohol is very poisonous for children.
 - B. Nothing. He'll just take a longer nap, and you can get in a few more innings of softball.
 - C. Don't worry. It's a hot day and he'll just sweat it out.

- 8) You are visiting the grandparents' home. Your youngster tells you how good those white candies are—and offers you some. You look around and discover that those “candies” are grandmom’s pills. Now what??
- A. Call the poison center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.
 - B. Wait until grandmom gets home so you can ask her what they are.
 - C. Don’t worry. Grandmom is in pretty good health, so she wouldn’t be taking any dangerous medicines.
- 9) Last-minute company is coming. You’re short on mushrooms for dinner. Should you pick those white ones that are growing in your lawn?
- A. Only if they match pictures of safe mushrooms in an encyclopedia.
 - B. Only if your neighbor says they’re OK.
 - C. Don’t do it! Eating some types of wild mushrooms can cause severe liver damage, or even be fatal.
- 10) It’s the Fourth of July and you are celebrating with friend and family at an outdoor party. What should you do to avoid food poisoning?
- A. Keep cold foods cold, in a cooler and in the shade.
 - B. Keep hot foods hot.
 - C. Keep hot and cold foods at room temperature for NO MORE THAN two hours. (No more than one hour if the air or room temperature is above 90 degrees.)
 - D. Keep raw meat and poultry, and their juices, separate from other raw foods and from cooked foods.
 - E. Wash your hands before handling food.
 - F. All of the above.

THANKS FOR TAKING OUR SUMMER SAFETY QUIZ. PLEASE CHECK YOUR ANSWERS ON THE NEXT PAGE AND REVIEW THE EXPLANATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL POISON SAFETY INFORMATION.

AND REMEMBER: CALL 1-800-222-1222 FROM WHEREVER YOU ARE, 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK FOR EMERGENCY TREATMENT ADVICE FOR POISONING. ALSO CALL FOR ANSWERS TO ALL YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT POISONS AND POISON PREVENTION.

TEST YOUR POISON SUMMER SAFETY IQ ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS

1) C. Pain-relieving skin creams often contain benzocaine, dibucaine or lidocaine. A child who swallows just a small amount can have seizures. Some children have even died. If you use these medicines, be sure that you replace them in their child-resistant containers right away. Then lock them out of sight and reach of small children. If you find a child with a tube of pain-relieving skin cream, call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 right away.

2) C. Smoke from burning poison ivy contains the poison ivy oils. Breathing in that smoke can cause poison ivy blisters *INSIDE* your nose, throat, and breathing passages. Of course, touching poison ivy can also cause poison ivy blisters on your skin.

Be sure that everyone in your family knows how to recognize and avoid poison ivy. Remember, "Leaves of three, let it be". If someone touches poison ivy, immediately rinse with plenty of running water for at least five minutes. If someone has trouble breathing, call 911 or your local emergency ambulance number right away.

3) C. Of course, we all lived off the land before the days of grocery stores and canned goods. But unless you've had special training in identifying edible plants, *DON'T* pick your own foods in the wild. Poison hemlock and water hemlock are different plants but each can be fatal to people who eat them. Their roots, or tubers, can look like wild carrots or parsnips. If someone has eaten hemlock or anything that looks like it, call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

4) B. It's true that most snakes are *NOT* poisonous. But if you're bitten by a poisonous snake, knowing what to do makes a big difference. If someone is bitten by a snake, call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 right away. The experts at your poison center will help you figure out if the snake was poisonous, then tell you what to do and what to watch for. If it's a non-poisonous snake, you may simply need to wash the wound. You also might need a tetanus booster shot. If the snake may have been poisonous, the poison center experts will give you up-to-date first aid advice. They will then work with the emergency department to be sure that you get up-to-date treatment. (And by the way, wearing shoes can prevent not only snake bites, but can help avoid scorpion stings, too, if you live in scorpion country.)

5) C. Drinking charcoal lighter fluid is dangerous. The same is true of other petroleum-based liquids (hydrocarbons) like gasoline, kerosene, paint thinner, baby oil, lamp oil, furniture polish, etc. When you swallow these and other hydrocarbons, they can easily go down the wrong way and get into your lungs. Only a small amount can cause pneumonia within a few hours. The liquid also spreads out over the inner surface of your lungs, preventing oxygen from entering your blood stream. Charcoal lighter fluid and other hydrocarbons *MUST* be stored in their original child-resistant containers, locked out of sight and reach of children. When you use these products, do not put them down where children can reach them; immediately lock them away when you're done. If someone has

swallowed lighter fluid, or other possible poisons, call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 right away.

6) A. *Many kinds of garden chemicals are poisonous to children and adults. They can poison you if swallowed. Also, many can poison you if you breathe them in or get them on your skin. If someone splashes a garden chemical on the skin, rinse with running water for 15-20 minutes. Often, that's easiest in the shower. Take off any contaminated clothing while you're rinsing. If someone has swallowed, breathed in, or splashed some kind of garden chemical, call the poison center right away at 1-800-222-1222.*

7) A. *Alcohol can be a deadly poison for children. This is true whether children drink beer, wine, mixed drinks, other alcoholic beverages, or mouthwash. Because of their small size and immature livers, children are subject to different effects from adults who overindulge. Children will become drowsy as their central nervous system is affected by alcohol. They can also develop low blood sugar, leading to seizures, coma, and death. If a child swallows something with alcohol in it, call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 right away.*

8) A. *Poison exposures are common when families visit or travel. Children may get into medicines and possible poisons when they visit in other peoples' homes. Medicines that are locked away at home may be in an open suitcase or low counter when families travel.*

Medicines taken by older adults are often extremely dangerous for children. In fact, a child can be dangerously poisoned by swallowing a single table of some medicines used for heart disease, high blood pressure, or diabetes. It's easy to forget how quickly children will reach for what's appealing—and children will put anything they can reach into their mouths. Also, children learn by imitation; children who watch adults taking medicine will try to do the same thing.

When traveling, use child-resistant containers for medicines and lock them securely away from children. A suitcase with a lock might be useful. When visiting in someone else's home, be sure that medicines and other possible poisons are in child-resistant packaging, locked where children cannot see or reach them.

Keep the poison center phone number handy. From anywhere in the U.S., you can call the same number to reach the local poison center: 1-800-222-1222.

9) C. *Unless you are an expert, you cannot tell poisonous mushrooms from safe mushrooms. Mushrooms called "death caps" (*Amanita phalloides*, *Amanita verna*) grow easily in yards and parks. Eating even a few bites can cause fatal liver damage. There are other types of poisonous mushrooms, too, which can fool you. Get your mushrooms from the market! Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 right away if someone eats a wild mushroom. The experts at your poison center will tell you what to do, what to watch for, and how to safely save the mushroom in case it needs to be identified later on.*

10) F. *All of the above steps will help ensure that you have a safe outing. These commonsense steps can help prevent food poisoning from ruining summer fun.*

FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT POISONS—OR IF YOU THINK THERE’S BEEN A POISONING-- CALL YOUR POISON CENTER AT 1-800-222-1222.