

Poison Antidote



Over-the-Counter Medications

Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are used to treat many different ailments including headache, heartburn, diarrhea, constipation, cough, colds, and much more. According to the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA), 8 in 10 consumers use OTC medicines to relieve symptoms for a range of illnesses, and the average household spends \$340 on OTC medicines each year.

Some people may think that, since a medicine is available without a prescription, it does not have the potential to cause harm. OTC drugs are considered safe, but taking them incorrectly can cause harm. There can be risks involved with OTC medication use, storage, and disposal just as there are with prescription drugs. Some OTC drugs interact with other medicines, supplements, and food or drinks, or they cause problems for people with certain medical conditions. It is important to take medicines correctly and to be very careful when giving medicines to children.

OTC drugs have a Drug Facts label, which can help you choose the right medicine. It includes the ingredients, what the medicine is used for, how to use it, warnings of when to talk with a doctor or pharmacist, and directions for use.

Safety Tips

- *Read the label carefully.*
- *Choose a medicine that treats only the symptoms you have.*
- *Do not use two medicines with the same active ingredients.*
- *Use the dose listed on the label.*

Resources: CHPA, FDA



Food Poisoning Is Common: Here's How to Prevent It

Food poisoning occurs when a person ingests food or water that contains bacteria or other harmful organisms. Symptoms may begin 2–6 hours after eating contaminated food or may sometimes be delayed for a few days. Ingesting these harmful germs can lead to symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, and headaches. Symptoms vary in how long they last. Some common types of food poisoning last only a couple of hours while others can last up to several days. However, food poisoning may be more serious for infants, the elderly, and those with a weakened immune system.

Ways to prevent food poisoning in your home:

- **CLEAN:** Keep hands and cooking utensils clean when preparing meals. Thoroughly wash cutting boards, knives, and other utensils.
- **SEPARATE:** When preparing meat or poultry, keep them separated from fruits and vegetables so bacteria from the meat does not get on the produce.
- **COOL:** Refrigerate food immediately after the meal is finished. This keeps food out of the temperature danger zone where bacteria can grow.
- **COOK:** Cook meat to the right temperature to ensure that bacteria does not survive.

Quick tips to stay food safe:

- Wash fruits and vegetables.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds before handling food.
- Put raw meat in a plastic bag or on a plate in the fridge to prevent juices from dripping on other food.
- Cook solid meat to 145°F, ground meat to 160°F, poultry to 165°F, and eggs to 160°F.
- Heat leftovers to 165°F.
- Thaw and marinate meat in the fridge.
- Put groceries in the fridge as quickly as possible.
- When home canning, follow recommendations for boiling jars.
- When in doubt...throw it out!

Ways to prevent poisoning while eating out:

- Check the local health department website for the latest health inspection information and score or rating of the restaurant.
- When ordering meat, ask the waiter to cook it to the proper temperature (such as pork above 160°F).

What should I do if food poisoning occurs?

If you suspect food poisoning, contact the poison control center (800-222-1222). Experts are available 24/7 to help you.

Resources: CDC, NIH, FoodSafety.gov, Mayo Clinic