

Poison Antidote



Child Opioid Poisonings on the Rise

Opioid use has increased in recent years, bringing more medications into homes. As a result, there has been an increase in opioid overdoses in children ages 10 and under. A prescription opioid is a painkiller such as oxycodone, codeine, or morphine that is prescribed by a doctor for moderate to severe pain. Research shows a child's risk of overdose doubles if a parent brings home an opioid medication. If you have opioids in your home, follow these poison prevention tips to help keep children safe:

- Always keep medication up, out of reach and sight of children.
- Never set medication on a nightstand or counter to take later.
- Keep medication in its original container.
- Use child-resistant closures on medication. While these closures are not "childproof," they can slow the child down, providing you a few more seconds to prevent the exposure.
- Never take your medication in front of children since they often mimic adult behavior.
- Keep medication locked away so that teens and others cannot access it.
- Dispose of unused or expired medication in a take-back receptacle located at certain pharmacies and police stations. Visit useonlyasdirected.org for a list of locations.

If you have opioids in your home, it is beneficial to have naloxone on hand. Naloxone is a medication that can reverse an overdose and is available without a prescription in many Utah pharmacies. Visit naloxone.utah.gov for more information. If you suspect a poisoning, call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222. If the person is not breathing, call 911.

Sources: MedlinePlus



Utah Poison Control Center Fall 2017



Back to School Safety

With a new school year starting, many parents are preparing by purchasing pencils, crayons, and paper, but don't forget to review poison safety as part of your preparation! Each year, on average, 60% of calls to Utah Poison Control Center (UPCC) involve children under the age of 6, while 12% involve children 6-19 years of age. Parents, teachers, school nurses, and students can help prevent poisonings this school year by following these tips.

- **Check for Classroom Poison Hazards:** Poison hazards such as cleaners, craft supplies, batteries, and magnets may lurk inside the classroom. During projects or other activities, children may come in contact with these potential hazards. The following precautions should be taken:

- Store potentially harmful products up and out of reach and sight of children and in their original containers. These hazards may include medications, vitamins and supplements, cleaning supplies, and pesticides.
- Teach children how to properly use potentially harmful products that are common in schools like hand sanitizer, glue, and markers.
- Caution children about look-alike products that may cause confusion like cleaner and juice, medicine and candy, and glue and milk.
- Never let young children play with button batteries. These small batteries are especially hazardous when swallowed, causing severe burns on the inside of the throat.

- **Be Aware of Outdoor Poison Hazards:** While playing outside during recess, after school, or during other activities, children may face poison hazards. These potential hazards include plants, mushrooms, pesticides, and insects or animals that can bite or sting.

Follow these tips to avoid outside hazards:

- Caution children not to touch insects or animals.
- Teach children not to touch plants or mushrooms growing outside.
- Become familiar with plants on school property in case a child is exposed. Visit the UPCC website for a list and pictures of common plants in Utah: poisoncontrol.utah.edu/plant-guide/index.php.

- **Use Medication Safely:** Some children may need to take medication at school. Many schools have a medication policy, prohibiting students from handling their own medication. Research shows children start to self-medicate around the age of 11. Therefore, it is important to teach older children and teens safe medication use. Follow these tips before sending children to school:

- Ask about the school's medication policy to make sure your student is compliant.
- Teach older children and teens to read labels and follow safe dosing instructions. Explain that taking extra medication can be very dangerous and will not make them feel better quicker.
- Teach children never to share medication. Even though their medication helps them, it could be harmful to their classmates.
- Inform the school nurse of medication your child takes, along with dosing instructions.

- **Save the Poison Help Number:** Save the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222) in your cell phone and display the number at school. Calls to the poison center are free and confidential, and experts are available 24/7.

If you have questions about poison prevention strategies or want to teach a lesson on poison prevention at your school, visit the UPCC website for lesson plans and activities for students of all ages: poisoncontrol.utah.edu/publicized/lesson-plans/index.php.

Sources: AAPCC-Texas Poison Center, JAPA Volume 52, Issue 6