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Beware of Look-Alike Products

It Could Happen to You!
A woman mistakes fingernail glue for eye drops… a daycare worker unintentionally serves windshield wiper fluid to children thinking it is a juice drink…. a child eats an entire package of chocolate laxative medicine assuming it is a candy bar. These are just a few examples of actual scenarios that poison centers deal with every day involving products that look-alike. Usually mix-ups occur because product shapes, colors, labeling and/or packaging are similar in many products. Young children often mistake medicine for candy and cleaners & personal care products for drinks or food. Children are naturally curious and explore by touching and putting things into the mouth. It is the responsibility of adults to help keep children safe. While young children are at a particularly high risk, people of all ages are vulnerable to poisonings from look-alike products.

How to Prevent a Look-Alike Poisoning
• Keep all potential poisons locked up and out of the reach of children
• Store non-food items in a separate location from food items
• Keep all products in the original containers. Transferring chemicals into water bottles or soda bottles is extremely risky
• Most poisonings occur when a product or medicine is in use. Never leave a product unattended
• Turn on the lights, put on your glasses, and read the label before using medicine, eye drops, or other health products

If a poisoning occurs
1. Call the Utah Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222
2. Have the product in hand to give information to the poison specialist
3. Stay calm and cooperate with poison experts to get fast and efficient help

FAQ about DEET

What is it?
DEET is the active ingredient in many insect repellent products. It is one of the most effective insect repellants available to thwart off mosquitoes and ticks. The concentration of DEET in products varies from less than 10% up to 90%. Recent studies have shown that oil of lemon eucalyptus provides similar protection to products that contain low concentrations of DEET.

Why use it?
The use of insect repellant helps reduce exposure to viruses transmitted by mosquitoes and other insects such as the West Nile Virus. Diseases transmitted by mosquitoes and other illness have the potential to cause severe illness and death in susceptible individuals. Using insect repellant makes it possible to spend more time outdoors even when mosquitoes are present.

When should it be used?
Use insect repellants whenever going outdoors, whether or not you can see mosquitoes. Most mosquitoes bite between dusk and dawn, but they may bite at anytime of the day or night.

How should it be used?
Follow the directions on the repellant label. Use the following safety tips:
• Do not apply on cuts, wounds or irritated skin
• Do not apply to the hands of young children, or near the mouth or the eyes
• Do not spray directly on the face
• Do not allow young children to apply it
• Do not use underneath clothing (applying to the outside of clothing is safe)
• Don’t over-apply the product
• Do not spray in enclosed areas or near food
• Wash treated skin after returning indoors
• The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend using DEET on children under 2 months of age

Resources: CDC  AAP  EPA

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