

Poison Antidote



Time to Spring Clean Your Medicine Cabinet

Spring is typically the time when we clean things up around the house, but do not forget the medicine cabinet, because old or expired medicines may pose a poisoning risk. Medications may become less or more potent over time, and dosing instructions may have changed. Also, just because a physician prescribed the medicine in the past doesn't mean it will always be appropriate or safe. Dispose of all old or expired medicines properly. Many police departments and pharmacies now take back medication. Visit useonlyasdirected.org for a list of disposal sites.

Cleaning out your medicine cabinet could reveal potentially dangerous products. For example, up until a few years ago, there were several different concentrations of the pain- and fever-reducing medicine acetaminophen. A lower concentration was marketed for children, while a higher concentration was marketed for infants. This caused confusion for many people and resulted in some children not getting enough of a dose and others getting too much. In an effort to remedy the problem, many manufacturers voluntarily stopped making the infant drops, producing only the less concentrated form of acetaminophen liquid to be used for all children. However, the higher concentrated infant form may still be in some homes and stores. Check your cabinet, and discard any children's infant drops. Follow these tips to stay safe:

- Keep medicine out of the reach of children.
- Do not use or purchase liquid acetaminophen meant for infants and dispose of any still in the home (80 mg per 0.8 mL or 80 mg per 1 mL).
- Check the label to ensure that your child is given the correct dose and concentration (160 mg per 5 mL).
- Use the dosing device provided with the product.
- Properly dispose of medications.
- Call your healthcare provider or the Utah Poison Control Center with any questions or concerns, at 1-800-222-1222.



Protect Against Insect Bites

Bites and stings from insects are common during the summer months. Throughout the United States and the world, diseases may be transmitted through insect bites, including West Nile virus, Dengue, Zika virus, and other diseases. In Utah, mosquitoes may carry West Nile virus. Insect repellents can be very effective at reducing the risk for a bite and therefore the transmission of a disease. There are several types of repellents on the market; however, those containing diethyltoluamide (DEET) are the most effective and are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) to prevent insect-related diseases. DEET offers protection against insect bites such as mosquitoes and ticks. Concentrations of DEET in repellents can range from 4% to 100%, and the amount in a product can be found on the label. Studies have shown that there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of products that contain greater than 50% concentration of DEET.

The guidelines for using insect repellents on children are different from adults. Insect repellents should not be used on infants under 2 months old. Instead, protect them by draping mosquito netting, preferably with an elastic edge for a tight fit, over their carrier or car seat. For children over 2 months old, adults should apply insect repellent with a DEET concentration no greater than 30% by applying it to their own hands and then gently spreading it over the child's exposed skin. Avoid areas such as the eyes, mouth, and hands, since infants and toddlers tend to put their hands in their mouths.

DEET can be used to reduce the chance of being bitten by mosquitoes, ticks, and other insects and may decrease the risk of many insect-borne viruses. Using DEET can increase the amount of time you spend outdoors when disease-carrying insects are most present and reduce your chance of contracting an insect-borne illness. However, it is not as effective as barrier protections, such as long-sleeved clothing or using mosquito netting in sleeping areas. If you are traveling to a country that has reported cases of any insect-borne illnesses, be sure to use insect repellent when going outdoors, and use a mosquito net when sleeping.

Follow these safety tips for using insect repellent:

- Follow the directions on the label.
- Do not use on cuts, wounds, or irritated skin.
- Do not use near the eyes or mouth.
- Do not spray in enclosed areas or around food.
- Do not use on children under 2 months old.
- Do not spray under clothes; instead, spray the outside of clothing.

You can also use these non-chemical methods to avoid insect bites:

- Wear long pants and long sleeve shirts when outside.
- Stay inside during peak hours, dusk to dawn.
- Remove any standing water where mosquitoes can lay eggs. Resources: CDC, AAP

Utah Poison
Control Center

Spring/Summer
2016



UNIVERSITY OF UTAH
COLLEGE OF PHARMACY
L. S. SKAGGS PHARMACY INSTITUTE