



# POISON ANTIDOTE



## Utah Poison Control Center

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## Medicine Mishaps Put Children at Risk

Medication use among consumers is alarming. In the United States, 82% of adults and 56% of children take at least one medication every week. With so many people using and storing medication in the home, unintentional poisoning from these products is increasing.

Every year an estimated more than 71,000 children end up in hospital emergency departments from unintentional medicine overdoses. Most of these poisonings occur in children under 6 years of age. The most common medicines involved are; acetaminophen (Tylenol®), cough and cold medicine, antidepressants, and NSAIDs (such as ibuprofen, Advil®, and Motrin®). The majority of these poisonings are the result of children getting into medicine while unsupervised. Ways to prevent these poisonings include;

- Keep medicine out of the reach of children and locked up.
- Never call medicine candy.
- Do not allow young children to witness others who are taking medicine.
- Be cautious if medicine is out on the counter to be used. Most poisonings occur when the product is in use and a parent or caregiver becomes distracted.
- Use child resistant closures (CRC's) on medicine. Note that "child resistant" does NOT mean "child proof".
- Be sure that CRC's engage properly when closing medicine lids.

Another way that children are being poisoned from unintentional medicine overdoses is adult error. Administering medicine more frequently than prescribed, using inaccurate measuring devices such as regular spoons, using the wrong measuring device (tablespoon vs. teaspoon), and misplacing the decimal point when dosing medicine (5 mL instead of 0.5 mL), are all ways that these poisonings can occur. To help prevent these errors;

- Communicate medicine schedule with all of the child's caregivers to prevent multiple dosing.
- Understand the correct medicine dose and frequency for the child. Speak to your doctor or pharmacist for clarity.
- Call the Utah Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 before giving medicine if you have any questions. The call is free and confidential and is available 24 hours a day—7 days a week. We want to prevent poisonings!

## National Poison Prevention Week March 14-20, 2010

National Poison Prevention Week was implemented in 1961. It has given poison centers a unified opportunity to raise awareness to the poisoning problem. More than 2 million poisonings are reported to poison control centers in the U.S. each year. Poisonings can be prevented. National Poison Prevention Week is an opportunity to get involved in spreading the poison prevention message. Help us in observing this important week by visiting our website [www.utahpoisoncontrol.org](http://www.utahpoisoncontrol.org) to access lesson plans, poison prevention materials, newsletters, worksheets for children, and lots more. Use these resources to help prevent poisonings in your home and community. Call **1-800-222-1222** with any questions.



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