

POISONING FACT SHEET

Parents/Childcare Providers

What is a poison?

A poison is anything someone eats (ingestion), breathes (inhalation), gets in the eyes (ocular exposure), or on the skin (dermal exposure), that can cause sickness or death if it gets into or on the body. Poisons can be found in four forms: solid, liquid, spray or gas.

What are some dangerous poisons?

Medicines and vitamins:

heart, blood pressure drugs tranquilizers, nerve pills cough and cold medicines
iron pain relievers diabetes medicines

Household products

drain cleaners toilet bowl cleaners pesticides lamp oil
oven cleaners furniture polish gasoline, kerosene antifreeze, windshield solution

Personal care products

mouthwash permanent wave solutions hair removal products
nail glue remover nail primer

Plants

wild mushrooms philodendron foxglove castor bean
dieffenbachia pokeweed holly berries

Environmental poisons

carbon monoxide lead paint

How can I keep children safe from poisons?

Poisons often come in pretty colors and attractive containers. Children may mistake poisons for something good to eat or drink. Follow these safety tips to help keep children poison safe:

➤ Store Poisonous Products Safely

- Lock poisonous products and medicines out of the reach and sight of children.
- Store poisonous products in their original labeled containers.
- Keep medicines, vitamins, and household products in containers with child resistant caps.

➤ Use Poisonous Products Safely

- Before using a poisonous product, carefully read the label on the bottle.
- While using a poisonous product, never leave it unattended. A child may find it.
- After using a poisonous product, put it back in a locked cabinet. Make sure the container is closed tightly.
- Never call medicine “candy”. Children may eat medicine thinking it is candy.
- Do not take or give medicine in front of children, or while another child is watching.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors.
- Check your house for peeling paint.
- Keep the telephone number of your local Poison Center on or near your telephones.

What should I do if I think a child has been poisoned?

Call your local Poison Center right away. Do not wait for the child to look or feel sick! Follow these first-aid steps:

➤ Swallowed Poisons:

- Do not give the victim anything to eat or drink before calling the Poison Center or a doctor.
- Do not make the child throw-up or give ipecac syrup unless a doctor or the Poison Center tells you to.

➤ Inhaled Poisons:

- Get the victim to fresh air right away. Call the poison center.

➤ Poisons on the Skin:

- Remove contaminated clothing and rinse the child’s skin with water for 10 minutes. Call the poison center.

➤ Poisons in the Eye:

- Flush the child’s eye for 15 minutes using a large cup filled with lukewarm water held 2-4 inches from the eye. Call the poison center.

For more poison prevention and first aid information or to locate your local Poison Center, visit the American Association of Poison Control Centers website at: www.aapcc.org

This sheet is made available through the financial support of Health Resources and Services Administration Maternal Child Health Bureau