



Poisoning Prevention Tips

Poisoning is now the leading cause of death from injuries in the United States, as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. In this recent report, it was noted that in 2008, the number of poisoning deaths exceeded the number of motor vehicle traffic deaths for the first time since at least 1980.¹ A poison is any substance that can harm someone if it is used in the *wrong* way, by the *wrong* person or in the *wrong* amount.

These tips are brought to you by members of the National Poison Prevention Week Council. The Council has been helping to prevent poisonings for 50 years and is made up of representatives from industry, government, non-profit and health organizations to educate the public about the prevention of unintentional poisonings and accidental exposures in and around the home. These tips are intended for educational purposes and we encourage you to reproduce and share them with others. Together we can reduce poisonings that can cause death and injuries on the United States.

Poisoning prevention is in your hands. The following tips can help you protect yourself and your loved ones:

General Safety Tips

- 1.** Use National Poison Prevention Week as a time to raise awareness in your community about ways to prevent unintentional poisonings.
- 2.** Use National Poison Prevention Week as the time to inspect your entire home for any medicines or household products, such as detergents, cleaning products, pesticides, and fertilizers that may not be stored properly and correct the situation immediately. *Always* store medicines and household products up *high*, *away* and *out of sight* from children.
- 3.** Install safety latches on cabinets used for medicines and household products.
- 4.** Ensure children can't use chairs or stack items to climb to products stored out of their reach.
- 5.** Re-close medicines and other household products if interrupted during use. Many incidents happen when adults are distracted when using these products (e.g., by the telephone or the doorbell).

- 6.** Buy products in child-resistant packaging whenever possible. But remember, child-resistant is not childproof, and is designed to keep children away from the product for a short time before a parent notices.
- 7.** Once purchased, use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container tightly after each use.
- 8.** If you think someone has been poisoned, call Poison Help, 1-800-222-1222, to reach your local poison center. This national toll-free number works anywhere in the U.S. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- 9.** Keep the toll-free Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222, near your phone, or program 1-800-222-1222 into your home and mobile phone.
- 10.** When you leave your children in a babysitter's care, ensure he/she knows about the Poison Help number – 1-800-222-1222.
- 11.** Read medicine and product labels before each use and follow directions exactly.
- 12.** Teach children to always ask an adult before eating, drinking or touching anything.

Medicine Safety Tips

- 13.** Ask babysitters, visitors, and houseguests to keep purses, briefcases or bags that contain medicines up high, away and out of sight from your children. The same rule applies when your children are visiting a friend or relative's home.
- 14.** Buy products in child-resistant packaging whenever possible. But remember, child-resistant is not childproof, and is designed to keep children away from the product for a short time before a parent notices.
- 15.** Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container tightly after use.
- 16.** If you think someone has been poisoned, call 1-800-222-1222 to reach your local poison center. This national toll-free number works anywhere in the U.S. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- 17.** Keep the poison center toll-free number near your phone, or program 1-800-222-1222 into your home and mobile phone.
- 18.** Read medicine and product labels before each use and follow directions exactly.
- 19.** Tell children what medicine is and why you must be the one to give it to them.
- 20.** Never call medicine "candy" to get a child to take it.
- 21.** Never leave medicine out on a kitchen counter or at a sick child's bedside.

- 22.** Always turn the light on when giving or taking medicine. Check the dosage every time.
- 23.** Put on your glasses to read the label when you need to take a medicine so that you know you have the correct amount of the right medicine.
- 24.** Avoid taking medicine in front of children.
- 25.** Never take more than the prescribed amount of medicine.
- 26.** Never "borrow" a friend's medicine or take old medicines.
- 27.** Tell your doctor what other medicines you are taking so you can avoid harmful or dangerous drug interactions. This includes prescriptions, over-the-counter medicine, vitamins and herbal products.
- 28.** Clean out the medicine cabinet periodically, and safely dispose of medicines that are expired or no longer needed.
- 29.** Always relock the safety cap on a medicine bottle. If the medicine has a locking cap that turns, twist it until you hear the click or you cannot twist any more.
- 30.** Don't remove medicine from a child-resistant package and put it in another type of easy-to-open container. Read the labels of prescription and over-the-counter medicine carefully to make sure you are not taking more than one product at a time with the same active ingredient.
- 31.** When taking or giving medicines, don't put the next dose on the counter or a table where a child could reach them.
- 32.** Use only the measuring device (dosing cup, dosing syringe, or dropper) that is included with your medicine. If a measuring device is not included or you do not receive one, ask for one from your pharmacist. Don't substitute another item, such as a kitchen spoon.
- 33.** If you don't understand the instructions on the medicine label, or how to use the dosing device (dosing cup, dosing syringe, or dropper), talk to your pharmacist or doctor before using the medicine.
- 34.** Never share or sell your prescription medicines.
- 35.** Monitor the use of medicines prescribed for children and teenagers, such as medicines for attention deficit disorder, or ADD.
- 36.** Keep medicines in their original bottles or containers whenever possible. If you transfer medicines to another container, such as a pill minder or organizer, store them in a place that is too high for a child to reach or see, since these containers are often not child-resistant. If possible, ensure the storage location has a safety latch.
- 37.** Some medicines are dangerous when mixed with alcohol. Consult your doctor or pharmacist before drinking alcohol if you are taking a prescription or over-the-counter medicine.
- 38.** Talk to your doctor before taking any vitamins or herbal supplements. They can interact with your medicine.

Household Product Safety

- 39.** Keep cleaning products in their original container with their original label intact.
- 40.** Laundry product labels contain first aid information and are a valuable resource for consumers.
- 41.** Always close cleaning product containers immediately after use and put them away in a secure location after use.
- 42.** NEVER use food containers such as cups or bottles to store household and chemical products.
- 43.** Teach children that laundry and other cleaning products and their containers are not toys.
- 44.** Children are usually curious and explore all new things that they find in the home. Take care to keep laundry products out of reach of young children.
- 45.** Always remember to rinse and re-cap laundry containers before throwing away or recycling.
- 46.** Never use empty detergent containers for storage of any other materials.
- 47.** Remove children, pets, and toys before applying pesticides (inside or outside the home). Follow label directions to determine when children and pets can return to the area that has been treated.
- 48.** To protect children from exposure to mouse/rat/insect poison, use products with a tamper-resistant bait station.
- 49.** Regularly clean floors, window sills, and other surfaces to reduce possible exposure to lead and pesticide residues.
- 50.** Have your child tested for lead. Symptoms of lead poisoning may not be obvious right away, but behavior and learning problems can develop if high levels are left untreated.
- 51.** Wash children's hands, toys, pacifiers and bottles often. Store food in a separate area than household cleaning products and chemicals. Mistaking one for the other could cause a serious poisoning.
- 52.** Never combine household cleaning products because some chemical mixtures may release irritating gases.
- 53.** Turn on fans and open windows when using household cleaners and chemicals.
- 54.** Make it a practice to check the spray nozzle on products before use to ensure that it is directed away from your face and other people.
- 55.** Wear protective clothing, including long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, shoes and gloves, when spraying pesticides and other chemicals. Pesticides can be absorbed through the skin and can be extremely poisonous.

- 56.** Stay away from areas that have recently been sprayed with pesticides or other chemicals.
- 57.** Don't sniff chemical containers, whether you know what is inside or not.
- 58.** Keep batteries out of a child's reach. Contact the poison center right away if a child swallows a battery or a battery is missing from a toy or other household item, no matter how small the battery. Properly dispose of old batteries after they have been removed from an appliance.
- 59.** Keep magnetic toys and other magnetic items away from small children. Call the poison center right away if you suspect a child has swallowed a magnet.
- 60.** Install carbon monoxide detectors near or in your home's sleeping areas and on every level of the home.
- 61.** Know the name of all household plants in your home. Remove any poisonous plants from the house and yard.