<u>A Guide to Poison Prevention:</u> <u>Tips for Caregiver's of Small Children</u>

Overview

Approximately one-half of the poison exposure cases managed by the New Mexico Poison Center involve children under the age of six years. Children are at an increased risk of becoming poisoned because of their curious nature; small children learn about the world around them by touching, tasting and smelling. Thus, the proper storage of poisonous substances is imperative in the presence of young children.

Program Goal

The goal of this program is to teach caregivers (i.e., professionals, parents, grandparents and babysitters) how to protect the children they care for from becoming poisoned.

Program Objectives

- Define the term "poison"
- Identify poisons in and around the home / daycare setting
- Learn how to prevent a poisoning from occurring
- Learn protective behaviors that will help to prevent a poisoning
- Understand the factors that put children at an increased risk of becoming poisoned
- Understand the role that the New Mexico Poison Center plays in helping to prevent and manage poisonings

Program Outline (1:15 minutes; PowerPoint version available)

- I. <u>Introductions (25 minutes)</u>
 - Introduce yourself and let the class know that they will learn how to prevent a poisoning from occurring in the home and / or daycare setting.
 - May want to have the audience members introduce themselves if time permits.

- <u>Introductory Question</u>: Ask the audience what comes to mind when they think of the word "poison." Note: technical definition will be discussed after the video.
- **Introductory Exercise** (optional): Make copies of Appendix C ("Poisons by Room Activity Grid") and hand them out to the audience members—make sure that the answer key is not handed out. Tell the audience that they will get 5 10 minutes to think of as many poisons as possible for each room on the sheet.

At the end of the exercise, they can share responses. Other options include doing the exercise in groups and providing a prize for the group / individual(s) with the most exclusive answers. Exercise may also be adapted for daycare settings.

II. <u>Show Video (15 min.)</u>: Unintentional Poisoning: Prevent, React

- Video may be downloaded from the following web page: <u>http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/poison/poison-kids.shtml</u>.
- Tell the class that this video will introduce them to the different types of poisons, poison prevention and first aid. Inform the class that the video was produced by the New York City Poison Control Center; specific services and statistics associated with the New Mexico Poison Center will be covered later.

III. Discussion (30 minutes)

A. <u>4 W's of a poison(ing)</u>

1. What is a poison?

Answer (technical definition): Any substance (liquid, solid or gas) that can cause illness or death if it is inhaled, swallowed or splashed in the eyes or on the skin. Examples include, but are not limited to, household cleaners, oils, gasoline, personal cosmetics, medications, poisonous plants, etc.

2. Where do poisonings commonly occur?

Answer: 90% of poisonings occur in the home.¹

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. "Poisoning, A Fact Sheet."

3. When do poisonings occur?

Answer: Many childhood poisonings occur when the caregiver has become distracted while using a poisonous product or is otherwise busy. (e.g., preparing meals; tending to another child's needs; scouring the bathtub and the telephone rings, etc.)

4. Why do poisonings commonly occur among children?

Answer:

- Children are curious by nature—they learn about the world around them by touching, tasting and smelling.
- Child may lack the ability to learn from experience depending on the stage of development.
- Poisons are stored improperly.
 - Poison is within reach of the child.
 - Keep in mind that some toddlers will be able to climb depending on the stage of development; poisons must also be kept out of sight as well as out of reach of children.
 - Poison is not in a child-resistant container.
 - Poison is near or with food—adds to confusion.
- Child is left unsupervised—only takes a few seconds!
- **B.** <u>**Preventing a Poisoning**</u> (refer to Appendix A for a more complete list of poison prevention tips)
 - 1. Keep **all** cosmetics, cleaning products, auto supplies, medications, poisonous plants, alcohol, etc. out of sight and reach of children. Lock poisonous products up if possible. Purses and diaper bags often contain dangerous items; hence it is good idea to also keep these accessories out of reach of children.
 - Parents should make sure that home visitors (e.g., grandparents) and other caregivers honor the above tips.
 - ✤ As little as 3 oz. of concentrated liquor can be lethal to a child weighing 25 lbs. or less. Extra caution is needed when small children are present at gatherings with alcohol.

- Medication that can be *deadly with one dose:* heart medicine, diabetic medicine, high-blood pressure medicine, anti-depressants, and narcotics. **All medications** must be stored out of reach; lock them up if possible.
- Other dangerous products: laundry detergent pods; leaded paint on older furniture or in older buildings; button batteries (in a lot of powered toys, hearing aids, etc.); and cadmium in children's jewelry. Keep these items out of reach! Apply tape to battery compartments and don't let children suck, chew or put jewelry into their mouths.
- 2. Store all medications, cleaning supplies and other potentially poisonous products in their original containers.
 - Original containers are likely to have a label with important product information.
 - Original containers may also have child-resistant packaging (lids and caps that are designed to make it more difficult for a child to get into). Remember that *child-resistant* does not mean *child-proof.*
 - ✤ A common call to the NM Poison Center involves children putting a tablet into their mouths that they found on the floor. Often times, the tablet fell out of a parent / caregiver's pocket. Professional caregivers should request that parents and other employees do not come into the home / facility with pills loose in their pockets.
- 3. Store poisonous products away from food / drink to avoid confusion.
 - Medications often look and taste like candy and other poisons often look and smell like food and drink!
 - Activity: Demonstrate to the class the resemblance between poisons and food / drink by viewing Appendix D. You may also want to bring in a pair of look-a-likes (e.g., water and rubbing alcohol) in unlabeled bottles. Assign the bottle with alcohol in it with the letter "A" and the bottle with water the letter "B." See if the audience can tell the difference. However, if children will be present, this activity is not advised.
- 4. Cook all food, especially meat, to the recommended temperature.
- 5. Supervise children at all times.

- 6. Teach a child to always ask a trusted adult first before touching or tasting anything.
- 7. Always make sure prescription labels are carefully checked before medicating to ensure that the proper medication is given at the right dosage and to the right individual. Always look at the correct dosage by weight of the child before medicating with over the counter medications.
- 8. Always use the measuring device (e.g., medicine spoon, medicine cup or syringe) that comes with the medicine to administer to children. **Do not** use eating spoons or other kitchenware to measure medication.
- 9. Install carbon monoxide detectors outside of every sleeping area and on each floor of the home; change batteries regularly. Never use a charcoal grill, generator or any other fuel emitting appliance in an enclosed area (e.g., home, tent, crawl space, etc.) even if the area is ventilated. Never warm a car up in the garage even if the garage door(s) is open. Inspect gas burning appliances regularly. Make sure chimneys are cleaned on a regular basis and that the flue(s) is open when in use.

C. <u>Reacting to a Poisoning</u>

- a) <u>First Aid</u>
 - 1. Try to remain calm.
 - 2. **Call 911** right away if the child:
 - stops breathing
 - is or has become unconscious
 - has a seizure
 - 3. **Poison in the eyes:** Rinse eyes with lukewarm, running water. Call the Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.
 - 4. **Poison on the skin:** Take off shoes and any clothing that is contaminated. Rinse skin with running water. Call the Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.
 - 5. **Inhaled poison:** Get to fresh air immediately. Call the Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.
 - Swallowed poison: Call your Poison Center immediately at 1-800-222-1222. Do not try to make the child vomit or use home remedies.

- b) Helpful information to have when making the call to NM Poison Center (refer to Appendix E for the Babysitter's Information Sheet):
 - Name of the product / item involved—try to have it close at hand when making the call to the NM Poison Center
 - Approximate amount of the poison that the child was to exposed to
 - Any symptoms
 - Time of exposure
 - Any health problems that the child has
 - Present location of the child
 - How the child was poisoned
- c) Keep the Poison Help Hotline number posted in an easy-to-find spot in case of a poison emergency: **1-800-222-1222**. Also, program your cell phone with the Poison Help Hotline.
- d) If you think that a child has been poisoned, please call the New Mexico Poison Center right away (1-800-222-1222)—even if you are not sure! Do not wait for the child to look or feel sick!
 - Question: Has anyone ever called the NM Poison Center? Would you like to share your experience?
 - ✤ Dispelling the <u>"Bad Parent Phenomenon"</u>:
 - A poisoning can happen to anyone at anytime, even in the safest of homes / facilities.
 - Do not think that you will be perceived as a bad parent / caregiver if you call the NM Poison Center.
 - The NM Poison Center is here to serve the public, and the services offered are completely confidential.

D. <u>NMPDIC-How We Can Help</u>

1. <u>Help with a poison emergency</u>—NM Poison Center successfully manages **70%** of their cases over the telephone!

- i. Using your Poison Center makes sense because
 - NM Poison Center is free, confidential and open 24 hrs. a day, 365 days a year;
 - the service saves you money! Unnecessary ambulance rides and emergency room visits are expensive → NM Poison Center saves New Mexicans millions of dollars every year in avoided health care costs;
 - when you self refer, an ambulance may be diverted from an individual who desperately needs paramedic expertise and attention (e.g., heart attack victim). Let your poison center help you determine the level of care that is needed for the poisoning; and
 - the experts in toxicology are at your Poison Center. Doctors and paramedics also call the Poison Center for help in treating a poisoned patient.
- 2. <u>Answer questions about poisons</u>
- 3. <u>Answer questions about medications</u>—adverse reactions, tablet identification, etc.
- 4. <u>Provide free educational materials</u>—brochures, telephone stickers and magnets with the Poison Help Hotline number **(1-800-222-1222)**, and more.

IV. <u>Closing (5 minutes)</u>

A. Prevent

To prevent a poisoning, keep all poisons locked up and out of sight and reach of children and in child-resistant packaging.

- B. <u>React</u>
 - 1. Poisonings can happen even in the safest of homes.
 - 2. It is important to stay calm in the event of a poisoning and follow the appropriate first aid steps.
 - 3. Call NM Poison Center right away for treatment advice. Do not wait for symptoms to appear!

- 4. NM Poison center is free public service, confidential and staffed with experts 24hrs. a day, 365 days a year. Call us if you need us!
- 5. Ask the audience to educate other caregivers about what they have learned today!

C. Homework Assignment

Make a copy of Appendix B (Home Safety Checklist—English or Spanish) for each member of the audience. Ask them to go home and / or to the daycare they work for and make sure the items listed are stored out of sight and reach of children. Make sure they understand that the list of items is not comprehensive, and that there may be other poisons that should be stored appropriately.

V. Additional Resources

1. **Safe Kids USA:** <u>http://www.safekids.org/safety-basics/safety-resources-by-risk-area/poison/household-poison-prevention-1.html</u>

2. American Association of Poison Control Centers:

 $\frac{http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/PoisoningPrevention/TipsforBabysittersoroth}{erCaregivers.aspx}$

Appendix A:

Poison Prevention Tips

- ✓ Use child-resistant caps correctly, but remember *child-resistant* does not mean that they are *child-proof*.
- ✓ Keep medicines and products in their original, labeled, and child-resistant containers.
- ✓ Follow label instructions and warnings on medications and household products.
- ✓ Call medicine "medicine" not "candy". Children like to eat candy.
- ✓ Do not take medications in front of children because they like to imitate adults.
- ✓ Store poisonous products away from food so there is no confusion.
- ✓ Do not mix household products together.
- ✓ Keep all medicines, cosmetics and household products up high and out of the reach of children.
- ✓ Know the names of your indoor and outdoor plants and know which ones are poisonous.
- ✓ Keep all plants, seeds and bulbs where children cannot reach them.
- ✓ Teach children not to eat berries, seeds, plant food, mushrooms or any part of a plant.
- ✓ Remove mushrooms in your yard and throw them away—all mushrooms should be considered poisonous unless they have been correctly identified by an expert.
- ✓ Supervise children and never leave a child alone with a poisonous substance.
- ✓ Install safety latches on cabinets and drawers.
- ✓ Teach small children to "ask a trusted adult first" before putting anything into their mouths.
- ✓ Install carbon monoxide detectors near bedrooms and on each floor of your home.
- ✓ Share this information with grandparents, family, friends, caregivers and babysitters.
- Place the Poison Center telephone number on or near your phone so it is easy to find in an emergency or for questions about poisons:
 1-800-222-1222 (services for non-English speaking persons & the hearing impaired).
- If you or someone you know has come into contact with a poisonous substance, call
 1-800-222-1222 right away. Do not wait for symptoms to appear!
- Contact The New Mexico Poison and Drug Information Center's Health Educator at 505-272-1364 for further assistance in poison-proofing your home.



Appendix B:



Poison Prevention Home Checklist

Do you know what kind of poisons are in your home? The items below can be dangerous if they are swallowed, breathed in or touched. Use this list to help you find the poisons in each room of your home. Make sure that **all** poisons are locked up where children cannot see them or reach them.

Kitchen

- \Box Oven Cleaner
- 🗆 Drain Opener
- □ Alcoholic Beverages
- □ Soaps / Detergents
- \square Bug Killers
- 🗆 Ammonia
- \square Medications
- □ Vitamins / Iron Pills
- □ Herbal Products
- \Box Disinfectants

Bathroom

Cleansers / Disinfectants
Deodorizers
Personal Hygiene Products
Mouthwash
Shampoos / Hair Products
Bath Oils
Body Soap / Wash
Medications (topical & oral)
Aftershave Lotions

Living Room

D Plants

Outdoors

PlantsWild Mushrooms

Bedroom

- □ Medications (*sleeping aids)
- Colognes / Perfumes
- \Box Cosmetics
- □ Nail Polish Remover
- □ Jewelry Cleaners

Utility /Laundry <u>Room</u>

- □ Soaps / Detergents
- Disinfectants
- \square Bleaches

Garage / Storage

- Pesticides / Insecticides
- □ Rust Remover
- □ Gasoline
- □ Kerosene
- □ Paint Thinner
- 🗆 Lighter Fluid
- □ Antifreeze
- □ Windshield Washer Fluid
- Weed Killers / Fertilizers
- \square Pool Chemicals

Appendix B:



Lista de Control de Prevención de los Envenenamientos

¿Ud. conoce que tipos de venenos están en su casa? Los artículos en este lista pueden ser peligrosos si estén tomado, respirado, o tocado. La use este lista para ayudarle encontrar los venenos en cada parte de su casa. Asegúrese de que **todos** los venenos en este lista estén fuera del alcance los niños.

La Cocina

- □ Limpiador de horno
- □ Fuga de apertura
- □ Bebidas alcohólicos
- □ Jabón/detergente
- □ Matador de insectos
- □ Amoniaco
- In Medicamentos
- □ Vitaminas (con o sin hierro)
- □ Suplementos naturales
- □ Hierbas
- \Box Desinfectantes

El Baño

- \Box Limpiadores generales/desinfectantes
- 🗆 Eliminador de mal olor
- □ Productos Higiénicos
- 🗆 Lavado bucal
- 🗆 Champú y suavizante
- □ Aciete de bañera
- □ Jabón de cuerpo
- □ Medicamentos
- 🗆 Loción para después del afeitarse

La Sala

🗆 Plantas

Afuera/El césped
Description Plantas Description Hongos

El Cuarto

- Image: Medicamentos (para dormir)
- Colonia / Perfume
- \Box Cosméticos
- 🗆 Quitador de brilla de uña
- 🗆 Limpiador de alhajas

El Cuarto de Lavarropa

- 🗆 Jabón/detergente
- Desinfectantes
- □ Blanqueador

El Garage/El Trastero

- Pesticida/insecticida
- □ Limpiador de herrumbre
- 🗆 Gasolina
- 🗆 Queroseno
- □ Disolvente de pintura
- □ Gas de encendedor
- □ Anticongelante
- □ Limpiador del parabrisas
- □ Herbicida/fertilizante
- 🗆 Químicas de la piscina



Outside:

Appendix C: Activity Grid Answer Key (Note: These are only general examples; many more potential poisons could exist in the home.)

<u>Gargage / Shed</u>	Bedroom	Bathroom
Weed Killer	Perfume / Cologne	Cleaners / Disinfectants
Insecticides & Pesticides	Nail Polish & Remover	Deodorizers
Gasoline & Motor Oil	Medications	Cosmetics
Antifreeze	Cosmetics	Perfume / Colognes
Fertilizer & Plant Food	Jewelry Cleaner	Hair Products
Paint & Thinners	Mothballs	Medicines
Windshield Washer Fluid		Aftershave
Laundry	<u>Kitchen</u>	Living Room
Bleach	Disinfectants	Poisonous Plants
Detergents (*individual pods)	Liquor	Cigarettes / Butts
Fabric Softeners	Medicines / Vitamins	Liquor
Cleaning Solutions	Drain Cleaner	
	Oven Cleaner	
	Soaps / Detergents	

Outside: Poisonous Plants, Wild Mushrooms, Fertilizer, Plants recently sprayed w / insecticides, etc.

Appendix D: Look-A-Like Examples

If these products look alike to you... imagine what it's like from a child's view!



Appendix E: Babysitter's Information Sheet (Information sheet borrowed from Utah Poison Control Center)

Emergency Information

Family Name			
Home Address			
Emergency: 911			
Poison Control Cer	nter: 1- <mark>800-222</mark> -12	222	
Police:			
Fire Department: _			
Hospital:			
Doctor:			
Mom (work):			
Mom (cell):			
Dad (Work):			
Dad (Cell):			
Name, Weight, and med	licine the child takes:		
Name	Weight	Medicine	