

Poison Prevention and Treatment Tips

Each year, approximately 2.4 million people – more than half under age 6 – swallow or have contact with a poisonous substance. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has some important tips to prevent and to treat exposures to poison.

To poison proof your home:

Most poisonings occur when parents or caregivers are home but not paying attention. The most dangerous potential poisons are medicines, cleaning products, antifreeze, windshield wiper fluid, pesticides, furniture polish, gasoline, kerosene and lamp oil. Be especially vigilant when there is a change in routine. Holidays, visits to and from grandparents' homes, and other special events may bring greater risk of poisoning if the usual safeguards are defeated or not in place.

- Store medicine, cleaners, paints/varnishes and pesticides in their original packaging in locked cabinets or containers, out of sight and reach of children.
- Install a safety latch – that locks when you close the door – on child-accessible cabinets containing harmful products.
- Purchase and keep all medicines in containers with safety caps. Discard unused medication.
- Never refer to medicine as “candy” or another appealing name.
- Check the label each time you give a child medicine to ensure proper dosage.
- Never place poisonous products in food or drink containers.
- Keep coal, wood or kerosene stoves in safe working order.
- Maintain working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Treatment

If your child is unconscious, not breathing, or having convulsions or seizures due to poison contact or ingestion, call 911 or your local emergency number immediately. If your child has come in contact with poison, and has mild or no symptoms, call your poison control center at 1-800-222-1222

Different types and methods of poisoning require different, immediate treatment:

- Swallowed poison – Remove the item from the child, and have the child spit out any remaining substance. **Do not make your child vomit. Do not use syrup of ipecac.**
- Skin poison -- Remove the child's clothes and rinse the skin with lukewarm water for at least 15 minutes.
- Eye poison -- Flush the child's eye by holding the eyelid open and pouring a steady stream of room temperature water into the inner corner.
- Poisonous fumes – Take the child outside or into fresh air immediately. If the child has stopped breathing, start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and do not stop until the child breathes on his or her own, or until someone can take over.

