



Fall Poisonings

Just as the leaves start to change so do the calls to the Nebraska Regional Poison Center. The bee stings will continue till the first freeze and calls about the painful fingers from canning peppers will take their place. The calls on children eating flowers will change to berries on the bushes. The calls to the poison center are very seasonal and we would like to take the time to remind everyone of the typical types of calls we receive this time of year.

Peppers:

During this time of the year many families take to their kitchens and begin canning some of their favorite foods to enjoy during the winter months. But special care must be taken when handling hot peppers such as jalapeno, cherry, cayenne, chili, serrano and habanero. Capsaicin, the oily chemical irritant found in these peppers, can cause irritation, redness and burning pain when handled. The oil is spread easily, so avoid touching areas such as the eyes and face. The best prevention is to wear rubber gloves while canning. If you develop skin irritation while canning, call the Nebraska Regional Poison Center.

Berries:

Berries on the bushes are very tempting to young children. Teach children to ask before they pick and taste. Know which plants and berries are in your yard. Knowing the types of berries in your yard could save valuable time in the event of an exposure.

Cough and Cold medicines:

The H1N1 flu is on everyone's mind these days. If you are treating children with cough and cold medicines remember that these medications may contain antihistamines, decongestants, and/or cough suppressants. Some also contain acetaminophen and alcohol. Used incorrectly these drugs can have a stimulant effect on a child or may cause extreme drowsiness. Alcohol, although usually found in small concentrations in such medicines, if taken in large quantity can cause drunkenness, low blood sugar, and seizures in children.

Hand Sanitizers

Hand sanitizers have become a staple in our lives at home, school and work. Remember that these products usually contain an alcohol and when ingested in large quantities can cause symptoms of drowsiness, nausea and seizures in children. The ingredient that makes this product effective is the one that is the most dangerous. While it is highly unlikely that a child will develop symptoms by licking their hands after using this product – it is still a product that should be carefully monitored when around small children.

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center offers tips on poison prevention as a free community service. For more information, contact the Nebraska Regional Poison Center by calling (402) 955-5555 in the Omaha metropolitan area or toll-free at 1-800-222-1222.

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center is sponsored by The Nebraska Medical Center and University of Nebraska Medical Center.