



### Nearly 2.5 million people report an exposure to poison annually.

While more than half of those involved children younger than 6 (51 percent of 2,403,539 reported exposures), children accounted for slightly more than 2 percent of 1,229 total unintentional ("accidental") poisoning deaths. This is a testament to poison prevention campaigns, child resistant caps and other measures instituted over the past decades. Children's exposure to poison most often involves common at-home substances, like drugs, pesticides and cleaning products. Of the exposures reported in 2006, 93 percent took place in a home.

**This kit takes a two-track approach to poison prevention – education through the workplace and in the community.**

Although most people think of poisoning as a childhood issue, adults are overwhelmingly the cause for the steep recent increase in unintentional poisoning deaths. Between 1993 and 2003, there was a 107 percent increase in the unintentional poisoning death rate from overdoses among Americans ages 20 to 64. In some states overdoses have surpassed motor vehicle crash deaths to become the leading cause of unintentional death.

### Purpose of the Kit

The purpose of this kit is to reduce those statistics through a train-the-trainer approach. It takes a two-track approach to poison prevention – education through the [workplace](#) and in the [community](#). Both of the tracks highlight three topics: Poison Prevention 101; Hazardous Chemical Safety; and Medication Safety.

For each of these topics, the kit provides:

- Background information
- Strategies for implementing the kit
- Information on conducting an event
- Materials to use

Poison control centers can provide additional materials and information for specific regions. Call 1-800-222-1222.

**Hint: All blue underlined words and phrases are active links. To open the documents, place the cursor over the word, press Ctrl, and left click the mouse. You can also see and link to all documents from the [Kit Outline](#).**

To open the documents, place the cursor over the link, press Ctrl, and left click the mouse.

## CD-ROM Outline Introduction (Workplace/Community)

### Workplace Overview

#### **Poison Prevention 101**

Background

Strategies for Implementing the Kit

- Brown Bag Lunch
- Safety or Health Fair
- Bring Your Child to Work Day

#### **Materials**

##### **PowerPoint Presentations**

- Poison Prevention for Everyone
- An Introduction for Parents & Childcare Providers
- Fact or Fiction?

##### **Display**

- Interactive Exhibit Ideas

##### **Children's Activities**

- Secret Message 1
- Secret Message 2

##### **Flip Chart**

- True or False?

##### **Fact Sheets**

- Types of Poisons in the Home
- Carbon Monoxide
- Poisonous Plants
- Pesticides in the Home

##### **Brochures**

- Poison Control Centers (English)
- Poison Control Centers (Spanish)

##### **Posters**

- Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1
- Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2

#### **Hazardous Chemicals Safety**

Background

Strategies for Implementing the Kit

- Brown Bag Lunch
- Safety or Health Fair
- Bring Your Child to Work Day

#### **Materials**

##### **PowerPoint Presentations**

- Room by Room Safety Check
- Fact or Fiction?

##### **Display**

- Interactive Exhibit Ideas

##### **Flip Charts**

- Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room
- True or False?

##### **Children's Activity**

- Create a Label

##### **Fact Sheets**

- Common Hazardous Household Chemicals
- Understanding the Terms
- Safer Alternatives
- Disposal of Hazardous Products

##### **Brochures**

- Poison Control Centers (English)
- Poison Control Centers (Spanish)

#### **Workplace (con't)**

##### **Brochures (con't)**

- Read the Label First! Protect Your Household
- Read the Label First! Protect Your Kids
- Read the Label First! Protect Your Pet
- Read the Label First! Protect Your Garden

#### **Medication Safety**

Background

Strategies for Implementing the Kit

- Brown Bag Lunch
- Safety or Health Fair
- Bring Your Child to Work Day

#### **Materials**

##### **PowerPoint Presentations**

- Myths & Realities
- True or False?
- Preventing & Responding to Overdoses

##### **Flip Chart**

- True or False?

##### **Display**

- Interactive Exhibit Ideas

##### **Fact Sheets**

- Risk Factors of Overdosing
- Symptoms of Overdoses
- Preventing Overdoses
- Emergency Care for a Suspected Drug Overdose

##### **Handout**

- Medication Worksheet

##### **Brochures**

- Poison Control Centers (English)
- Poison Control Centers (Spanish)

##### **Posters**

- Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1
- Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2

Link to Fact Sheet Folder

Link to Information about Poison Control Centers

Link to Information about National Poison  
Prevention Week Council

Link to Other Sources of Information

Link to Evaluation Folder

## Community Overview

### **Poison Prevention 101**

#### Background

#### Strategies for Implementing the Kit

- [Presentations to Civic Organizations](#)
- [Presentations to Teachers or PTA](#)
- [Classroom Activities](#)
- [Safety or Health Fair](#)
- [Working with the Media](#)

#### **Materials**

##### **PowerPoint Presentations**

- [Poison Prevention for Everyone](#)
- [An Introduction for Parents & Childcare Providers](#)
- [Fact or Fiction?](#)

##### **Display**

- [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#)

##### **Children's Activities**

- [Poster Contest: NPPW](#)
- [Messages for Children](#)
- [Science Fair Project Information for Students](#)
- [Secret Message 1](#)
- [Secret Message 2](#)

##### **Templates**

- [Sample Letter to School](#)
- [Sample Flyer for PTA](#)

##### **Flip Chart**

- [True or False?](#)

##### **Fact Sheets**

- [Types of Poisons in the Home](#)
- [Carbon Monoxide](#)
- [Pesticides in the Home](#)
- [Poisonous Plants](#)

##### **Brochures**

- [Preventing Poisonings at Home](#)
- [Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)
- [Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)

##### **Posters**

- [Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)
- [Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)

### **Hazardous Chemicals Safety**

#### Background

#### Strategies for Implementing the Kit

- [Presentations to Civic Organizations](#)
- [Presentations to Teachers or PTA](#)
- [Classroom Activities](#)
- [Safety or Health Fair](#)
- [Working with the Media](#)

#### **Materials**

##### **PowerPoint Presentations**

- [Room by Room Safety Check](#)
- [Fact or Fiction?](#)

##### **Children's Activities**

- [Create a Label](#)
- [Create a Label Information for the Student](#)
- [Poster Contest: NPPW](#)
- [Messages for Children](#)
- [Word Search](#)
- [Cockroach Dinner](#)

##### **Templates**

- [Sample Letter to School](#)
- [Sample Flyer for PTA](#)

### **Community (con't)**

#### **Display (con't)**

- [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#)

#### **Flip Charts**

- [Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room](#)
- [True or False?](#)

#### **Fact Sheets**

- [Common Hazardous Household Chemicals](#)
- [Preventing Hazardous Chemicals Poisonings](#)
- [Understanding the Terms](#)
- [Safer Alternatives](#)
- [Disposal of Hazardous Products](#)

#### **Brochures**

- [Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)
- [Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Read the Label First! Protect Your Household](#)
- [Read the Label First! Protect Your Kids](#)
- [Read the Label First! Protect Your Pet](#)
- [Read the Label First! Protect Your Garden](#)

### **Medication Safety**

#### Background

#### Strategies for Implementing the Kit

- [Presentations to Civic Organizations](#)
- [Presentations to Teachers or PTA](#)
- [Classroom Activities](#)
- [Safety or Health Fair](#)
- [Working with the Media](#)

#### **Materials**

##### **PowerPoint Presentations**

- [Myths & Realities](#)
- [True or False?](#)
- [Preventing & Responding to Overdoses](#)

##### **Flip Chart**

- [True or False?](#)

##### **Display**

- [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#)

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- [Poster Contest: NPPW](#)
- [Science Fair Project Information for Students](#)
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- [Sample Letter to School](#)
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##### **Fact Sheets**

- [Risk Factors of Overdosing](#)
- [Symptoms of Overdoses](#)
- [Preventing Overdoses](#)
- [Emergency Care for a Suspected Drug Overdose](#)

##### **Handout**

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##### **Brochures**

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##### **Posters**

- [Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)
- [Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)



**Adults account for less than 30 percent of exposures, but are almost 90 percent of the deaths from poisonings. A significant number of these are related to medication.**

Workplaces can have hazardous chemicals on site, for which they receive Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) from the chemical manufacturers and distributors. These MSDS are written to ensure that workers and employers have access to practical information on chemical hazards to help them prevent work-related illness and disease. Workplaces can also have every day materials that can be hazardous.

However, employees who are used to working around hazardous chemicals, as well as employees who do not have chemicals in their workplace, can still be at risk for [hazardous chemicals](#), [medication overdose](#), and other [poisonings](#) in their home.

There is a rise in unintentional poisoning by adults older than 19 years of age. They comprise less than 30 percent of the exposures but are almost 90 percent of the deaths.

**There is a difference between unintentional and accidental. Unintentional means it was not done on purpose. Accidental means it happened by chance.**

The 2,403,539 poison exposures and 1,229 deaths in 2006, represent the workers and their families in the United States. It affects employees' lives and employers' bottom lines.

This kit is designed to help employers ensure that their workers are as safe from poisonings at home as they are at work. There are a number of ways that employers can provide this information:

- Brown bag lunch presentations
- Safety/health fairs
- Bring Your Child to Work days
- Payroll stuffers

Each of these types of outreach are discussed with step-by-step instructions, objectives, and materials.



# Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



# Workplace

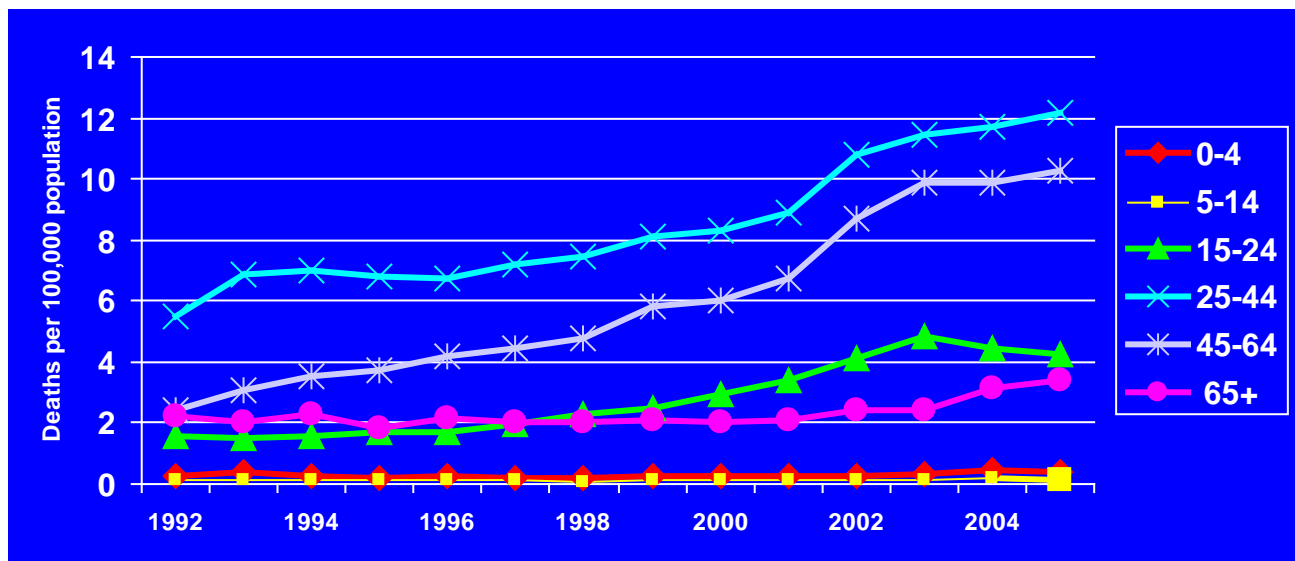
## Poison Prevention 101

### Background

**In the United States nearly 2.5 million people report an exposure to poisoning annually.**

A poison is any product or substance that can harm someone if it is used in the wrong way, by the wrong person, or in the wrong amount. Examples of possible poisons include some household products, chemicals at work or in the environment, drugs (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal, illegal or animal medicines), plants, and venomous bites.

### Poisoning Trends by Age



Source: National Safety Council

There is a rise in unintentional poisoning by adults older than 19 years of age. They comprise less than 30 percent of the exposures but are almost 90 percent of the deaths.

## Most Common Substance Risk by Age Group at Greatest Risk

	Hazardous Household Chemicals	Plants	Drugs	Alcohol	CO	Total
Children	58.9	0.5	30.3	3.4	6.1	100.0%
Teens	20.2	1.6	52.5	20.8	4.9	100.0%
Adults	22.2	3.7	50.0	11.1	13.0	100.0%
Elderly	25.9	1.2	52.9	7.1	12.9	100.0%

*Source: National Safety Council*

There are actions that employees can take to protect themselves and their families from poisonings:

- **Proper use of a product or medication** – Products and medications can hurt you if they are used the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person.
- **Proper storage** – Don't store food and cleansers together. Poisons should be kept up high, out of sight, and locked up.
- **Recognize look-a-like products** – Household products and medications come in attractive and colorful containers and packaging.
- **Supervision** – When children are unsupervised, this increases the risk of child poisonings. Poisonings occur most frequently at meal times when parents/caregivers are busy preparing meals.

These prevention messages can be relayed to employees in a number of ways, including brown bag lunch presentations, safety/health fairs, and payroll stuffers. To get started, review the [Strategies for Implementing the Kit](#).



### Strategies for Implementing the Kit

Reaching adults about their risks and changing their behavior can be a challenge.

To help reduce these risks and ensure that workers are as safe at home as they are at work, employers can provide essential poisoning prevention information to their employees. These prevention messages can be relayed to employees in a number of ways and highlighted at different times. Poison prevention should be promoted year-round; however, there are certain times when the number of unintentional poisonings escalates due to specific activities with a season or holiday.

Poison prevention messages can be highlighted around:

- **Winter:** Antifreeze is highly hazardous, and exposures are common during cold, wintery conditions. Carbon monoxide is also an issue during this time of year.
- **Spring:** Spring cleaning causes an increase in the use of household cleaners and other chemicals, such as pesticides, that can increase unintentional poisonings.
- **[National Poison Prevention Week \(NPPW\)](#):** NPPW is an opportunity during the third week of March to amplify poison prevention, specifically hazardous chemical safety, in a nationwide effort and through local activities.
- **Summer:** Warmer months mean more time outdoors. Keep in mind that also means a higher likelihood of contact with poisonous animals such as snakes, insects such as bees and spiders. This increases the use of repellants which may be harmful if used improperly or in large amounts. Summer also brings about hurricane season, making it important to emphasize safety when using generators, a potential source of carbon monoxide poisoning. Pool, spa, lawn and garden chemicals are also prevalent in the summer.
- **Fall:** This is a crucial time to emphasize medication safety as medicine consumption rises during cold and flu season. Halloween provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of consumption safety, such as reviewing each piece of candy before ingestion.

Poison prevention messages can underscore activities specific to each season. A summary of some examples on how to promote poison prevention to employees is provided below. Click on the link for more details on organizing each type of event.

[Brown Bag Lunch](#)

If the staff is not very large, or it is possible to have the staff attend in small groups (5 to 25 people), brown bag lunch presentations are a very effective way to provide information to employees. The presentation can be a PowerPoint slide show or it can be in an interactive quiz format. Both can stimulate discussion and fact sheets and brochures can be provided for employees to take home.

### [Safety or Health Fairs](#)

If the staff is too large to accommodate the brown bag lunch type of presentation, providing the information through a fair could be effective. Many large companies already have safety or health fairs for their employees and poison prevention can be a display. If the company does not have its own fair, it might be possible to partner with community safety or health fairs, or to have a display at a county or state fair. The PowerPoint presentation or Fact or Fiction Quiz can be playing continuously to draw people to the booth; attendees can participate in the interactive quiz, test themselves with the flip chart, and receive handouts to take home to their families.

### [Bring Your Child to Work Day](#)

Many companies set aside a day when employees are invited to bring their child into work with them. Although part of the day is spent explaining what the parent does, some companies have found this a perfect opportunity to discuss safety and health issues that can effect the whole family. Poison prevention would be a good topic to include in those discussions. A display can be set up in the lobby, a large office, conference room, lunch room, or classroom. Parents and children can be invited to stop by and engage in the interactive activities or watch the PowerPoint display. They can also be provided with materials to take home.

### **Intranet Pages**

Many companies use Intranets (an internal version of the Internet) to keep their employees up to date on company policies, events, safety information, and other important information. The fact sheets and brochures contained in this kit can be uploaded to the Intranet. Some of them can be highlighted during national observances, such as [types of poisonings](#) in the home can be highlighted during National Poison Prevention Week, [carbon monoxide](#) can be highlighted during Fire Safety Week, or [poisonous plants](#) at the beginning of summer.

### **Payroll Stuffers**

Other way to reach all employees is through payroll envelopes. There are tri-fold brochures that give basic information about poisonings and the Poison Help 1-800-222-1222 phone number. Many people have the misperception that the poison control centers are only for children, but every teen and adult – whether they have children or not – should be aware of the number and the service the centers provide. These brochures are available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), and be obtained by calling the number and asking for the poison educator.

# Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



# Workplace

## Poison Prevention 101

### Brown Bag Lunch

- Objective:** Raise employees' awareness about the risks of poisonings, to themselves and their families.
- Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes
- Setting:** Conference room, lunch room, classroom
- Equipment:** Laptop computer, LCD projector, screen or blank wall
- Preparation:** Read Background information, practice with PowerPoints, choose which materials to hand out, and read them prior to the presentation
- Materials:** [PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[PowerPoint: Poison Prevention for Everyone](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: Parents & Childcare Providers](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Types of Poisons in the Home](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Pesticides in the Home](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Carbon Monoxide](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Poisonous Plants](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)
- Marketing:** Place a "Coming Soon" flyer on bulletin boards or in lunch room; make an announcement on Intranet (one month in advance, and the weekly reminders); payroll stuffer announcements; employee newsletter. If the budget allows, provide lunch to increase attendance.

**Poison prevention is not only for children**

# Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



# Workplace

## Poison Prevention 101

### Safety or Health Fair

**Objective:** Raise employee's awareness about the risks of poisonings, to themselves and their families.

**Time Needed:** Half day to whole day

**Setting:** Cafeteria, conference room, lobby (if on-site); community center, school, library, fairgrounds or other large site open to the public (if off-site)

**Equipment:** Laptop computer

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, become familiar with the material in the handouts, and call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) to receive additional materials and items (magnets, stickers, etc.) to hand out.

You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

**Materials:** [PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Types of Poisons in the Home](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Pesticides in the Home](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Carbon Monoxide](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Poisonous Plants](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)

**Marketing:** Place a "Coming Soon" flyer on bulletin boards or in lunch room; make an announcement on Intranet (one month in advance, and the weekly reminders); payroll stuffer announcements; employee newsletter.





### Bring Your Child to Work Day

**Objective:** Raise employees' awareness about the risks of poisonings, to themselves and their families.

**Time Needed:** Half day to whole day

**Setting:** Cafeteria, large classroom (if on site) or community center, school, fairgrounds (if partnering off site)

**Equipment:** Laptop computer

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, become familiar with the material in the handouts, and call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) to receive additional materials and items (magnets, stickers, etc.) to hand out.

You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

**Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentation: Parents & Childcare Providers](#)  
[PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Flip Chart: True or False](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Types of Poisons in the Home](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Carbon Monoxide](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Poisonous Plants](#)  
[Children's Activity: Secret Message 1](#)  
[Children's Activity: Secret Message 2](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
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**Marketing:** Place a "Coming Soon" flyer on bulletin boards or in lunch room; make an announcement on Intranet (one month in advance, and the weekly reminders); payroll stuffer announcements; employee newsletter.



# **Poison Prevention for Everyone**

In the United States nearly  
2.5 million people report an  
exposure to poisoning  
annually.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

A poison is any product or substance that can harm someone if it is used in the wrong way, by the wrong person, or in the wrong amount.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Most Common Substance Risk by Age Group at Greatest Risk

	Hazardous Household Chemicals	Plants	Drugs	Alcohol	CO	Total
Children	58.9	0.5	30.3	3.4	6.1	100%
Teens	20.2	1.6	52.5	20.8	4.9	100%
Adults	22.2	3.7	50.0	11.1	13.0	100%
Elderly	25.9	1.2	52.9	7.1	12.9	100%

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Most Common Substance Risk by Age Group at Greatest Risk

- Some household products
- Chemicals at work or in the environment
- Drugs (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal, illegal or animal medicines)
- Plants
- Venomous bites

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



# Medications

Medicine can help us to get well when we are sick. However, when giving or taking medicines, always remember the 5 "rights":

- Right Medication
- Right Person
- Right Amount
- Right Way
- Right Time



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Cleaning products

- Can be poisonous if inhaled, ingested, or splashed on the skin or in the eyes.
- Can make deadly combinations when used together.
- Should be kept in their original containers, clearly labeled.
- Read all directions and warnings **BEFORE** using a product.



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Health and Beauty Products

- Cosmetics and other personal care items range in toxicity
- Perfumes, aftershaves, colognes and mouthwash all contain alcohol
- Should be kept out of the reach of children



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Outdoor Items

- Poisonous plants are commonly found in our homes, gardens, and public areas
- Plants poison through contact with the skin and contact with the mouth including swallowing
- Reactions range from mild skin irritation to much more serious effects



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Pesticides

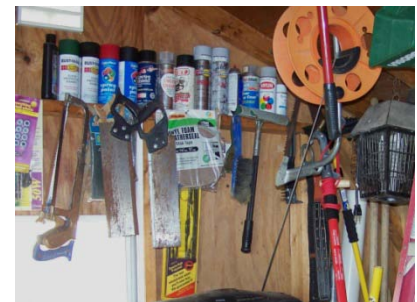
- Read the directions on the label carefully BEFORE using
- Wear protective clothing
- Wash hands after contact with pesticides
- Keep all fertilizers and pesticides in their original containers under lock and key



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Garage Items

- Fluids for the car, home improvement products, and other chemicals can be harmful and even fatal
- Store automotive and household products in a locked area
- Keep chemicals in their original containers
- Read directions BEFORE using the product



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



# Prevention Action

- Proper use of a product or medication
- Proper storage
- Recognize look-a-like products
- Supervision

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Keep the nationwide poison  
control center's number  
**(800) 222-1222**  
beside every phone in your home  
and programmed into  
your cell phone.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



# **An Introduction for Parents and Child Care Providers**

The overwhelming majority of poisonings occur at home. Although exposure to hazardous substances is scary and dangerous at any age, children have a special vulnerability that heightens the danger.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers:

- In 2006 there were 2.4 million poison exposure calls.
- Children younger than 3 years were involved in 38.0%.
- 50.9% occurred with children younger than 6 years.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Children's bodies, behaviors (such as putting objects and hands in their mouth), and size make them different from and more vulnerable than adults to many environmental health hazards.



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



In proportion to their size, children breathe more air, drink more water, and eat more food than adults. This means that they are potentially at greater risk of exposure to poisons.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

Some of the most common household products can be very hazardous. These include:

- cleaning substances
- laundry products
- cosmetics
- garden supplies
- automotive products
- pesticides
- toys and hobby materials
- fuels
- paints and pool products

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

These products come in many shapes, sizes and colors which can easily enter the body through the mouth, eyes, nose and skin.

- Liquids
- Powders
- Granules
- Sprays
- Aerosols

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Most often, children are poisoned in their own homes. The top four reported reasons why children accidentally poison themselves are:

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**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Number 1: Poisons are not stored properly.

- Leaving recently used medication bottles on a counter or table.
- Bottles on the counter or table, purses or diaper bags sitting on the floor
- Opened cleaning products left unattended for "just one second."

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## Number 2: Children are curious.

- Children are naturally curious about the taste, smell and texture of products.
- Children may be interested in how spray containers work.
- By swallowing, smelling or spraying a product children learn more about it.
- By smelling, touching, and tasting, they learn about the world.
- Brightly colored liquids, spray containers, pills, and leafy or flowering plants attract children.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

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## **Number 3: Children think a poison is something other than a poison.**

- Children can think fuels, cough syrup, and shampoo are safe to drink, because they look like fruit punch or soft drinks.
- Children may think the odor of a product is similar to a liquid that is safe to drink.
- Many poisons look or taste similar to other things. Medicine tablets look and taste like candy. Antifreeze tastes sweet. Red mouthwash looks like fruit punch.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Number 4: Children imitate the behavior of adults.

Children copy what their parents, grandparents, brothers, or sisters do, such as:

- taking medication
- drinking colored liquids
- cleaning house
- spraying chemicals



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



## To prevent poisonings:

- Set up safe storage areas for all household chemicals and medicines.
- Use child-resistant caps.
- Keep products in their original containers.
- Keep purses and diaper bags out of reach.



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# To prevent poisonings:

- Keep alcohol drinks and mouthwash away from children.
- Do not store food items and non food items together.
- Keep houseplants out of a young child's reach.
- Teach your children never to put plants in their mouths.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# When you buy a product that is potentially poisonous, read the label first so you will:

- Understand the intended use
- Buy the proper amount
- Know how to store unused portions
- Know how to dispose of empty containers

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Keep the nationwide poison  
control center's number  
**(800) 222-1222**  
beside every phone in your home and  
programmed into your cell phone.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# **Fact or Fiction?**

**Poisonings usually involve bleach and other household cleaners.**

**FICTION:** Household cleaners are just one type of poison.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**You have to swallow poison in order for it to harm you.**

**FICTION:** Poisons come in various forms and harm through numerous pathways.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Carbon monoxide is a poison that can kill children and adults.**

**FACT:** Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas. When a person breathes in CO, it goes into the organs instead of oxygen.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**Drug overdosing and other poisonings happen more often than guns or automobile accidents, or house fires.**

**FACT:** Nearly 2.5 million people report an exposure to poisoning annually.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**It is okay to take someone else's prescription medicine if you have the same symptoms.**

**FICTION:** You should never take someone else's prescription medicine.

**CAUTION, WARNING, and DANGER** all mean the same thing on a package.

**FICTION: CAUTION** is the lowest level of potential harm. **WARNING** means it could cause serious illness and the product is flammable. **DANGER** is the highest level.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**There are only a few  
poisonous plants.**

**FICTION:** An estimated 700+  
species of plants growing in North  
America have caused illness or  
death in humans.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**It is okay to combine household cleaners to make a stronger cleaner.**

**FICTION:** Never mix chemicals. Doing so can create a poisonous gas.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Pesticides are the only household products that cause poisonings.**

**FICTION:** Some of the most common household products can be very hazardous.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**If you don't completely use a pesticide, it is best to put it in a smaller container.**

**FICTION:** You should always keep pesticides and other hazardous chemicals in their original container.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**The staff of the poison control centers are all poison experts.**

**FACT:** Poison centers are staffed by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**The poison control number should only be called when someone shows signs for poisoning.**

**FICTION:** Do not wait for signs of poisoning. Many poisonings can be avoided with a call to the poison center.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Poison centers are not just for children; they should be used for adults as well.**

**FACT:** More than 70 percent of all poisoning deaths occur in adults ages 20 to 59.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



### Interactive Exhibit Ideas

**DO NOT walk away from a display if you have poisons on the table!**

Many poison prevention educators have developed displays and games that they use to educate the public on various aspects of poison prevention. Call the nationwide toll-free poison prevention number – 800-222-1222 – to talk with your local poison educator about their displays and games. Many of the local poison control centers have educational materials available on their website. Go the website for the American Association of Poison Control Centers, <http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/>, and click on the “Find Local Poison Center” to find information about your local poison control center.

Below are some suggestions for activities and displays that you can make and use.

### Candy/Medicine Display

Make a display of candies and medicines that look alike by gluing them side by side on a piece of paper. Put the paper on a poster board or in a clear plastic box frame. Let children guess which ones are medicines and which ones are candies.

**Explain that in real life, they should NOT guess, but “Ask Before Tasting”!**

Some examples for the display include:

- White Tylenol caplets and white Good n’ Plenty
- Tums and Necco wafers
- Benadryl and pink Good n’ Plenty
- Red round Sudafed pills and Red Hots
- Colored gel-caps (any kind) and jelly beans
- Pastel round flat antacids and Sweetarts
- Baby aspirin and Sweetarts
- Jelly bean vitamins and jelly beans
- Gummi bear vitamins and gummi bears
- Vita-balls and gum balls
- Aspergum and cinnamon gum
- Round coated Advil and tropical M&M’s
- Brown round Tylenol and M&M’s or Skittles



Gummi bear vitamins  
and gummi bears

## Poison Look-a-likes

Make a display of poisons and food and drinks. Glue the solid items to a piece of poster boards and place the liquids in clear containers and glue the lids shut.

Some examples of items include:

- Mothballs next to marshmallows
- Chocolate Ex-lax next to chocolate candy bar
- Grape flavored cough medicine (liquid) next to grape juice
- Clear liquids in 3 containers: Vodka or rubbing alcohol, vinegar, water.
- Blue liquids in 3 containers: PowerAde, Windex, blue mouthwash.
- Yellow liquids: Pine Sol, a yellow liquor, apple juice. (You'll need a fresh apple juice every time you display it because it ferments and gets cloudy.)

*Courtesy of Connecticut Poison Control Center:*

<http://poisoncontrol.uchc.edu/education/programs/healthfair.htm>

## True or False Flipchart

Print out the questions and answers for the [True or False Flipchart](#) on cover stock (heavy paper) with each question and answer on a separate piece of paper. Laminate the sheets and punch three holes in top of the sheets. Place the sheets in a ½" or 1" three ring binder. This will hold the pages together, but allow the pages to be flipped. To get the display to stand on the table, fold the notebook inside out so the rings are facing upward. Put the first part of the Velcro dots in the two outside corners of both the front and back covers of the binders. Put the second part of the Velcro dots on both ends of two pieces of ribbons that are about 5" to 6" long. Then join the ribbons to the Velcro dots that are in the corners. This will form a tent that will allow the questions and answers to be read then flipped over.



### Secret Message 1

Use the code key to decipher an important secret poison prevention message.

#### Code:

26 = A	17 = J	8 = S
25 = B	16 = K	7 = T
24 = C	15 = L	6 = U
23 = D	14 = M	5 = V
22 = E	13 = N	4 = W
21 = F	12 = O	3 = X
20 = G	11 = P	2 = Y
19 = H	10 = Q	1 = Z
18 = I	9 = R	

26 15 4 26 2 8 4 26 8 19 2 12 6 9 19 26 13 23 8

25 22 21 12 9 22 22 26 7 18 13 20





### Secret Message 2

Use the code key to decipher an important secret poison prevention message.

#### Code:

26 = A	17 = J	8 = S
25 = B	16 = K	7 = T
24 = C	15 = L	6 = U
23 = D	14 = M	5 = V
22 = E	13 = N	4 = W
21 = F	12 = O	3 = X
20 = G	11 = P	2 = Y
19 = H	10 = Q	1 = Z
18 = I	9 = R	

12 13 15 2    7 26 16 22    14 22 23 18 24 18 13 22 8

7 19 26 7    2 12 6 9    11 26 9 22 13 7 8

20 18 5 22    7 12 2 12 6





# True or False?

Answer True or False to each question  
and then flip the card to check your answer.

**Good Luck!**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**A poison is any product or substance that can harm someone if it is used in the wrong way, by the wrong person, or in the wrong amount.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True

In 2006 the 61 poison centers in the United States received 2,403,539 calls regarding human exposures to poisoning.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**All poisons are liquids.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

Poisons can be liquid, solid,  
gas, or spray.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Most poisoning deaths occur in  
children ages 6 and younger.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

Although children are the most frequently exposed, most poisoning deaths occur in adults.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**If you only have a little bit of a household chemical left, it is best to put it into a smaller container.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

Keep products in original containers. The labels have information you may need in case of a poisoning.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**Carbon monoxide is a poison  
that can kill children and  
adults.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas. It enters the body through the lungs, and prevents the blood from carrying and using oxygen properly, and harms the brain and other organs.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**People are hurt more often in  
cars, fires, or other accidents  
than by poison.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

Poisonings happen more often.  
Nearly 2.5 million people report an  
exposure to poisoning annually.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**CAUTION, WARNING, and  
DANGER all mean the same  
thing on a package.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

**CAUTION** is the lowest level of potential harm.

**WARNING** means it could cause serious illness.

**DANGER** is the highest level of potential harm.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**There are only a few  
poisonous plants.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

There are more than 700  
species of poisonous plants  
growing in North America.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**Pesticides are the only  
household products that  
cause poisonings.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## False

Some common hazardous household products include: cosmetics; pesticides; cleaning, laundry, garden, automotive, pool products; hobby materials; fuels; and paints.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**It is okay to combine  
household cleaners to make  
a stronger cleaner.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

Never mix chemicals. Doing so  
can create a poisonous gas.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**It is okay to take someone  
else's prescription medicine  
if you have the same  
symptoms.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## False

Never take someone else's prescription medicine because their doctor took in consideration many factors (their medical history, other medications they are taking, age, weight, etc.).

**The staff of the poison  
control centers are all  
poison experts.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True**

Poison centers are staffed by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**Poison centers are not just  
for children; they should be  
used for adults as well.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True**

More than 70 percent of all poisoning deaths occur in adults ages 20 to 59.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Fact Sheet

## Types of Poisons in the Home

**As consumers, we buy more than a quarter of a million different potentially hazardous household products.**

These materials used in and around the home for medication, cleaning, cosmetic purposes, and killing insects and weeds.

### Medications

Medicine can help us to get well when we are sick. However, medicine needs to be taken by the right person, in the right amount, and in the right way. Ingesting the wrong medicine or too much medicine could make you really sick, it could even cause death. Many households have over-the-counter medicines like vitamins, herbals, pain relievers, and creams. Prescription drugs should be taken under a physician's guidance. All medicines come with directions. Read and follow the directions that say how much to take, when to take it, and things to avoid (like driving, certain foods, other medications, etc).



### Cleaning Products

Cleaning products make cleaning the house easier. They often smell good and have attractive packaging. However, these products are poisonous if inhaled, ingested, or splashed on the skin or in the eyes. Some products can make deadly combinations when used together. For example, mixing chlorine and ammonia makes a deadly gas. Always keep household cleaners in their original containers. Containers should be clearly labeled. Read all directions and warnings BEFORE using a product. Never store leftover cleaning products in food containers like a used water bottle or a plastic container.



### Health & Beauty Products

Health and beauty products are designed to make us look better, smell better and feel better, but they too can be poisonous. Cosmetics and other personal care items range in toxicity. Some have little to no effect on the body like lipstick while others are a clear danger like perfumes. Perfumes, aftershaves, colognes and mouthwash all contain alcohol. Alcohol is not meant to be ingested by children. It can cause serious illness and even death. These products should be kept out of the reach of children.



## Outdoor Items

Plants are pretty. They come in a wide variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. Children are especially attracted to plants that smell good, look colorful, have berries, and are within easy reach. While most plants are harmless to humans, poisonous plants are commonly found in our homes, gardens, and public areas. Plants poison people in two ways – contact with the skin and contact with the mouth including swallowing. Reactions range from mild skin irritation to much more serious effects. It is common that one part of a plant is poisonous while other parts are not. Poisonous mushrooms are very difficult to identify. Even the experts make mistakes. Never eat mushrooms found in or on the ground. Only eat the type found in the grocery store.



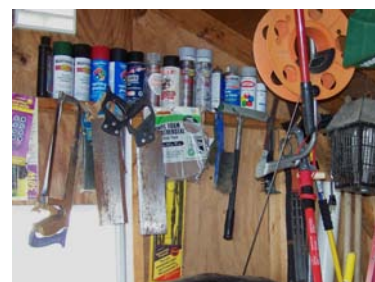
## Pesticides

Many people use bug killers, weed killers, lawn fertilizers, and other pesticides and insecticides to keep their trees, shrubs and lawns healthy and insect-free. These products are poisonous and can be particularly dangerous. Read the directions on the label carefully BEFORE using the product and follow safety instructions, every time you use the product. Wear protective clothing such as gloves, goggles, masks, and long sleeves/pants. Wash hands after contact with pesticides. Do not apply pesticides on a windy day. Keep all fertilizers and pesticides in their original containers under lock and key. Be careful not to spray children's toys, play gyms, sandboxes, bikes, or pet food dishes when applying pesticides.



## Garage Items

Fluids for the car, home improvement products, and chemicals help to keep our homes and cars looking and running well. However, dangerous poisons can be found in the garage or other storage areas like sheds, basements, and closets. These products can be harmful and even fatal if swallowed, inhaled, or splashed on the skin or in the eye. For example, windshield washer fluid can cause blindness and possible death in small amounts. When inhaled, many of these products can have toxic effects on the body. Store automotive and household products in a locked area. Keep chemicals in their original containers and read directions BEFORE using the product. Never keep leftover chemicals in water bottles, coffee cans, and other food containers. Follow the safety precautions on the container. on the container.



# Fact Sheet

## Carbon Monoxide

**Roughly 300 people die each year from carbon monoxide poisoning.**

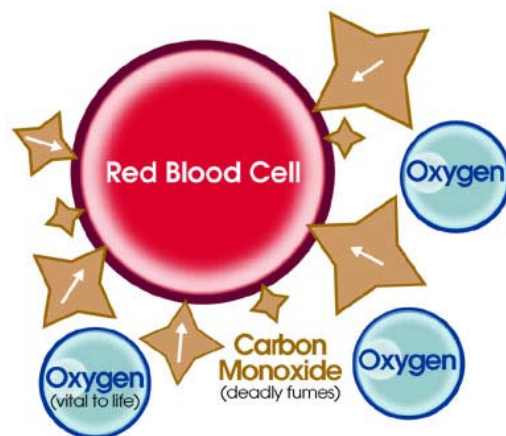
Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. It is made when fuels burn improperly. Many fuels can produce carbon monoxide, such as:

- Wood
- Oil
- Natural gas
- Gasoline
- Kerosene
- Propane
- Coal
- Diesel

## Health Effects

It enters the body through the lungs, and is delivered to the blood. It prevents the blood from carrying and using oxygen properly, and harms the brain and other organs. Depending on the amount breathed in, CO can:

- cause loss of coordination
- worsen heart disease
- produce fatigue, headache, weakness, confusion, disorientation, nausea, and dizziness
- very high levels can cause death



The symptoms are sometimes confused with the flu or food poisoning. Fetuses, infants, elderly, and people with heart and respiratory illnesses are particularly at high risk for the adverse health effects of carbon monoxide.

## Prevention

- Install a CO detector.
- Never use portable generators indoor or near windows.
- Make sure appliances are properly adjusted and working to manufacturers' instructions and local building codes.
- Obtain annual inspections for heating system, chimneys, and flues and have them cleaned by a qualified technician.
- Open flues when fireplaces are in use.
- Use proper fuel in kerosene space heaters.
- Do not use ovens and gas ranges to heat your home.
- Do not burn charcoal inside a home, cabin, recreational vehicle, or camper.
- Make sure stoves and heaters are vented to the outside and that exhaust systems do not leak.
- Do not use unvented gas or kerosene space heaters in enclosed spaces.
- Never leave a car or lawn mower engine running in a shed or garage, or in any enclosed space.
- Make sure your furnace has an adequate intake of outside air.

## Emergency Actions

- Don't ignore your detector if it goes off
- Don't ignore symptoms, especially if more than one person is feeling them.
- Get fresh air immediately.
- Call 911 if you have symptoms.
- If you go to an emergency room, be sure to tell the physician that you suspect CO poisoning.
- Call the poison control center if your detector goes off, but you don't have symptoms.
- Have a qualified technician inspect your fuel-burning appliances and chimneys to make sure they are operating correctly.

## Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Carbon monoxide detectors are just as important as the proper use and maintenance of your fuel-burning appliances. CO detector technology is still being developed and the detectors are not generally considered to be as reliable as the smoke detectors found in homes today. You should not choose a CO detector solely on the basis of cost; do some research on the different features available.

Carbon monoxide detectors should meet Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) standards, have a long-term warranty, and be easily self-tested and reset to ensure proper functioning. For maximum effectiveness during sleeping hours, carbon monoxide detectors should be placed close to sleeping areas. A plug in detector with battery back-up, especially sound alarms, is best. Check your batteries monthly and replace as needed.

# Fact Sheet

## Poisonous Plants

**There are more than 700 species of poisonous plants growing in North America.**

Plants, indoors and out, can offer many benefits to body and soul. They add beauty and fragrance to our lives, they provide food, shelter, and privacy, and they have medicinal benefits. However, plants can also pose a risk when inappropriately used or accidentally eaten or touched. A plant poisoning can be an allergic reaction caused by spores or pollen, skin rashes caused by touching plants, and internal poisonings caused by eating of plants.



Some poisonous plants have become such an integral part of our lives that many of us have lost track of the fact they are potentially harmful.

A number of factors can play a role in the toxicity of plants: the part of plant; the time of year; the body weight of the person involved; the type of interaction (contact or ingested); and in some cases, the person's metabolism and susceptibility. Generally, the smaller a person is the less of the toxin is needed to cause ill effects, making children more vulnerable. Also individual's allergies play a role, i.e., some people may be seriously allergic to certain plants, such as peanuts or strawberries, while others can consume large quantities without harm.

Different species and even different individuals within a species can react quite differently. Just because a wild animal or bird ate something without becoming sick, that doesn't mean that it is not poisonous. Humans might be affected by certain plants, yet dogs or cats may be immune, for example cats and dogs can run through poison ivy without coming to harm, but people may suffer blistering and itching if they come in contact with the plant's sap (even petting their pets after they run through it).



Poisonous mushrooms are very difficult to identify. Even the experts make mistakes. Never eat mushrooms found in or on the ground. Only eat the type found in the grocery store.

To avoid poisonings from plants:



- Learn to recognize poisonous plants in your area.
- Identify all plants in the home. Have this information on hand for use in an emergency.
- Lock away or dispose of seeds, berries, bulbs and other plant materials that are known to be toxic.
- Remove known toxic plants from the house or place them out of the reach of children.
- Don't eat any part of an unknown plant.
- Don't let pets graze on poisonous plants.
- Only eat mushrooms that are purchased in the grocery store.



# Fact Sheet

## Pesticides in the Home

**It is estimated that 8 out of 10 American households contain one or more pesticide products.**

These items are valuable for home and yard maintenance. However, most pesticides are inherently toxic. Misuse, especially when products are used in inappropriate applications or quantities, can cause illness, injury, and even death.

Unintentional poisonings can happen to anyone, at any time, in many situations. Unintentional poisonings, however, can be prevented. Following label directions for all products, including medication dosages and proper storage of potentially toxic products, are important precautions to heed.

Some products, such as medicines, are easily recognized as a potential source of poisonings, but others may not be as obvious. Many common household products are pesticides. A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. Pests include insects, mice and other animals, unwanted plants (weeds), fungi, or microorganisms like bacteria and viruses.



Some people assume that, because most households use pesticides that are available at retail outlets and can be purchased by anyone, pesticides are “safe” to use. This is not necessarily the case. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates pesticides, does not allow pesticide product manufacturers to make safety claims.

Considering the risk inherent in misusing pesticides, it is troubling that annual surveys show that only one out of four American consumers read pesticide product labels which contain important use and emergency care information.

### **Household products that are classified as pesticides include:**

- Disinfectants, sanitizers, and air fresheners for the kitchen, laundry room, and bathroom
- Cockroach sprays and baits
- Insect repellents for personal use
- Rat and other rodent poisons
- Flea and tick sprays, powders, and pet collars
- Products that kill mold and mildew
- Some lawn and garden products, such as weed killers and fertilizers
- Some swimming pool and hot tub chemicals
- Chemicals used to treat wood used in decks and picnic tables, i.e. chromated copper arsenate (CCA) and alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ).

## Poison Prevention Tips

### Store Poisons Safely

- Store medicines and household products locked up, where children cannot see or reach them.
- Store poisons in their original containers.
- Use child-resistant packaging. But remember — nothing is child-proof!

### Use Poisons Safely

- Read the label. Follow the directions on medicines and products.
- Are children around? Take the product or medicine with you to answer the door or the phone.
- Lock products and medicines up after using them.
- Is it medicine? Call it medicine, not candy.
- Children learn by imitation. Take your medicines where children can't watch.

### Teach Children to Ask First

- Poisons can look like food or drink. Teach children to ask an adult before eating or drinking anything.

For more tips, log on to [www.1-800-222-1222.info](http://www.1-800-222-1222.info)



If you think someone has  
been poisoned, call your  
poison center right away  
**1-800-222-1222.**

## First Aid for Poisoning

### Has the person collapsed or stopped breathing?

- ▶ Call **911** or your local emergency number right away.

### Poison in the eyes?

- ▶ Rinse eyes with running water for 15 to 20 minutes.
- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**

### Poison on the skin?

- ▶ Take off any clothing that the poison touched.
- ▶ Rinse skin with running water for 15 to 20 minutes.
- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**

### Inhaled poison?

- ▶ Get to fresh air right away.
- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**

### Swallowed the wrong medicine or too much medicine?

- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**

### Swallowed something that's not food or medicine?

- ▶ Drink a small amount of milk or water.
- ▶ Call **1-800-222-1222.**



## YOUR POISON CENTER

**Call FAST to treat a poisoning!**

**Call FIRST to prevent a poisoning!**

**POISON**  
**HelP**  
**1-800-222-1222**

**POISON**  
**HelP**  
**1-800-222-1222**

© American Association of Poison Control Centers 2003  
[www.1-800-222-1222.info](http://www.1-800-222-1222.info)

**24 hours a day • 7 days a week**

## How Your Poison Center Helps You

In the United States, poison centers provide immediate treatment advice for poison emergencies. They also provide information about poisons and poison prevention, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Poisons can hurt you — or even kill you — if you eat them, breathe them, or get them in your eyes or on your skin. The poison center can help you with questions about:

- household products
- chemicals at work or in the environment
- drugs (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal, illegal, or animal medicines)
- snake bites, spider bites, and scorpion stings.

For life-saving treatment advice about any kind of poison, call **1-800-222-1222**. A specially trained nurse, pharmacist or doctor at your poison center will help. All services are free and confidential.

Poison center services are available for people with hearing problems and for non-English speakers.

When health care providers need information about treating poisonings, they also call their local poison center.

**1-800-222-1222**

## We Help People of All Ages — in All Types of Situations



WHEN CHILDREN GET INTO HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS, POISON CENTER EXPERTS ARE JUST ONE CALL AWAY.



POISON CENTERS HELP SENIORS AND PEOPLE OF ALL AGES WHEN THEY TAKE TOO MUCH OR THE WRONG MEDICINE.

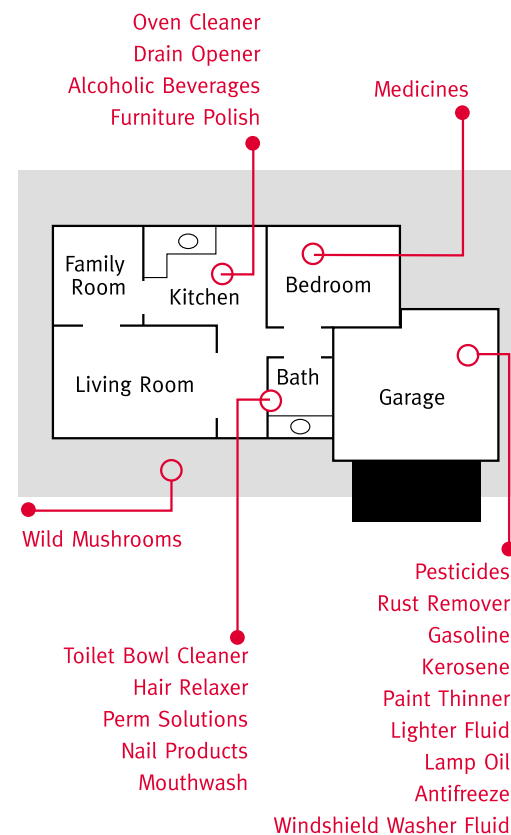


POISON CENTERS GIVE ADVICE ABOUT PREVENTING AND TREATING CHEMICAL EXPOSURES ON THE JOB.

**1-800-222-1222**

## You Can Prevent Poisonings at Home

Products and medicines can hurt you if they are used the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person.



**Have a question? All questions about poisons are smart questions.  
Ask FIRST to prevent a poisoning!**

**1-800-222-1222**

## Consejos Para Prevenir Envenenamientos

### Como Guardar Productos Tóxicos

- Guarde los medicamentos y productos de uso doméstico bajo llave, donde los niños no los vean ni los puedan alcanzar.
- Mantenga los medicamentos y productos de uso doméstico en sus envases originales.
- Use envases que sean a prueba de niños — Acuérdesse que para los niños, no hay nada imposible de abrir.

### Como Usar Productos Tóxicos con Seguridad

- Lea y siga las instrucciones de la etiqueta de los medicamentos y otros productos.
- Mantenga con usted cualquier medicamento o producto tóxico que esté usando si va a contestar el teléfono, abrir la puerta, o ante cualquier otra interrupción.
- Siempre guarde las medicinas bajo llave después de usarlas.
- Nunca llame a los medicamentos 'caramelos' o dulces. Si son medicinas, llámelas por sus propios nombres.
- Siempre tome las medicinas fuera de la vista de los niños.

### Enseñe a los Niños a Preguntar Siempre

- El veneno puede parecer comida o bebida. Enseñe a los niños a preguntar antes de comer o beber cualquier cosa.



**Si cree que alguien ha sido envenenado o intoxicado, llame a su Poison Control Center inmediatamente.**  
**1-800-222-1222.**

## Primeros Auxilios en Caso de Envenenamiento

### Si alguien deja de respirar o sufre un desmayo....

- ▶ Llame al **911** inmediatamente.

### Si algún producto tóxico se pone en contacto con los ojos....

- ▶ Lávese los ojos con agua corriente de 15 a 20 minutos.
- ▶ Llame al **1-800-222-1222.**

### Si algún producto tóxico se pone en contacto con la piel....

- ▶ Quítese cualquier prenda que haya tenido contacto con el producto.
- ▶ Lávese bien el área afectada con agua corriente de 15 a 20 minutos.
- ▶ Llame al **1-800-222-1222.**

### Si inhala algo venenoso....

- ▶ Salga al aire libre inmediatamente.
- ▶ Llame al **1-800-222-1222.**

### Si toma alguna medicina equivocada o en demasiada cantidad....

- ▶ Llame al **1-800-222-1222.**

### Si ingiere algo que no es comida o medicina....

- ▶ Beba un poco de leche o agua.
- ▶ Llame al **1-800-222-1222.**



## POISON CONTROL CENTER CENTRO DE TOXICOLOGÍA

**¡Llámenos INMEDIATAMENTE en caso de envenenamiento!**

**¡Consúltenos PRIMERO para prevenir un envenenamiento!**

**POISON  
Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**

**POISON  
Help**  
**1-800-222-1222**



## Working With Your Child

Begin teaching safety rules to children at an early age. Reinforce important poison prevention messages at home. For example:

- Always ask mom, dad, or the grown-up taking care of you before tasting, eating, or drinking anything.
- Only take medicine if mom, dad, or the grown-up taking care of you gives it to you.
- Find an adult immediately if you see something that might be poison. Call an adult right away if a sibling or friend gets into something that could be poisonous.

There are other ways to involve your child in the efforts to keep your home safe.

- Have your child help you put a Poison Control Center sticker on or near each phone.
- Invite your child to teach you Spike's "Stay-Away" Song, which he/she has been singing at school. Do the motions together for family fun!



### Spike's "Stay-Away" Song

(Sung to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It")

#### Verse I

If you don't know what it is,  
Stay away! (clap clap)  
If you don't know what it is,  
Stay away! (clap clap)  
If you don't know what it is,  
find a grown-up right away.  
If you don't know what it is,  
Stay away! (clap clap)

#### Motions

*Shake head; throw hands back in  
"hands off" motion; two claps*



*Calling motion with cupped hands*



#### Verse II

If you think it might be poison,  
Stay away! (clap clap)  
If you think it might be poison,  
Stay away! (clap clap)  
If you think it might be poison,  
find a grown-up right away.  
If you think it might be poison,  
Stay away! (clap clap)

*Point to own head; repeat  
"hands off" motion; two claps*



*Calling motion with cupped hands*



JMH Education Marketing, Inc., New York, NY

## Preventing Poisonings at Home



Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Poison prevention education for children can be a life saver. In fact, your child has been learning about poisons at school through the new *Quill's Up — Stay Away! A Poison Awareness Program*, featuring Spike the Poison Prevention Porcupine.

As parents, it's important to remember that children can't protect themselves from poison – or tell the difference between poisonous and non-poisonous substances. It's up to you to provide a safe environment at home!

This booklet includes information to help you poison proof your home — as well as ideas for working with your child. If you have any questions about keeping your home safe from unintentional poisonings, call the Poison Control Center Hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

Here's to a safe and happy home!

Rose Ann Soloway, BSN, MSED, DABAT  
Associate Director  
American Association of Poison Control Centers  
(AAPCC)



Poison Control  
Center Hotline:  
**1-800-222-1222**



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## The Basics

### Poison Prevention at Home

- Always read labels before giving medicine or using household products.
- Use child-resistant packages. Put the tops on tightly.
- Use cabinet locks.
- Identify the most dangerous products. Keep them in their original child-resistant packaging. Lock them away where children can't see or reach them. (See below.)
- Don't let children watch adults taking medicine.
- Call medicines by their proper names. Do not refer to them as candy!

### What is a Poison Control Center?

A Poison Center is an emergency telephone service. If someone may have been poisoned or, if you have questions about poisons, call **1-800-222-1222** right away.

- You can reach the Poison Control Center 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- When you call, you reach specially-trained nurses, pharmacists, and doctors.
- Advice is available in languages other than English.
- All services are free and confidential.

### Lock Them Up!

These products should be locked up, out of the reach and sight of children. Some may seem harmless, but can be poisonous to children if used in the wrong way, or in large quantities.

#### KITCHEN:

- Drain opener
- Oven cleaner
- Automatic dishwasher detergent
- Furniture polish



#### BATHROOM:

- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Mouthwash
- Prescription medicines
- Non-prescription medicines:
  - Cough medicine
  - Pain relievers
  - Vitamins with iron



#### GARAGE:

- Windshield washer fluid
- Antifreeze
- Paint thinner
- Gasoline
- Pesticides



#### YARD:

- Garden chemicals
- Wild mushrooms, berries, snakes, spiders, scorpions. (You can't lock them up, but you can teach children to stay away!)



## Be Prepared - Just in Case

There are some easy things you can do to be ready in case of an emergency.

- Post the Poison Control Center number in a prominent place. Make sure that all family members, babysitters, and other caregivers know where to find it.
- Call the Poison Control Center (**1-800-222-1222**) to learn what to have on hand in case of a poisoning.
- Always call the Poison Control Center right away if you think there's been a poisoning. The Poison Center experts will tell you the right thing to do.



### First Aid for Possible Poisonings

Has the child or other person

- ***Collapsed or stopped breathing?***  
**Call 911 or your local emergency number right away.**
- ***Swallowed the wrong medicine or too much medicine?***  
**Call 1-800-222-1222.**
- ***Swallowed a chemical?***  
**Drink a small amount of milk or water, and call 1-800-222-1222.**
- ***Inhaled poison?***  
**Get to fresh air right away, and call 1-800-222-1222.**
- ***Splashed poison on the skin?***  
**Take off any clothing that the poison touched. Rinse skin with running water for 15 to 20 minutes, and call 1-800-222-1222.**
- ***Splashed poison in the eyes?***  
**Rinse eyes with running water for 15 to 20 minutes. Call 1-800-222-1222.**

## Sometimes, Poisonings Happen . . .

Despite your best efforts, sometimes poisonings can happen. If you suspect a poisoning, do not wait for symptoms to appear. Call the Poison Control Center right away!

## 1-800-222-1222

If you call right away, the problem can often be taken care of over the phone. This is much faster, and cheaper, than calling an ambulance and going to the emergency room. If you do need an ambulance, the Poison Control Center will tell you what to do.

Poison Control Center Toll-Free Hotline:

# 1-800-222-1222



## Cómo el Poison Control Center le Puede Ayudar

En los Estados Unidos, los Poison Control Centers dan consejos de tratamiento en caso de emergencia por envenenamiento. También ofrecen información sobre venenos y prevención de envenenamientos las 24 horas al día, los 7 días de la semana.

Los productos tóxicos pueden hacerle daño si se ingieren, se inhalan, o si hacen contacto con los ojos o la piel — incluso pueden hasta causar la muerte. El Poison Control Center puede ayudarle con sus preguntas sobre:

- productos de uso doméstico
- productos químicos (industriales o del medio ambiente)
- medicamentos con o sin receta médica, hierbas medicinales, drogas ilegales, medicinas para sus mascotas, etc...
- mordeduras de serpientes y arañas, picaduras de escorpiones, etc...

Cuando usted llama al **1-800-222-1222** en caso de una emergencia por envenenamiento, recibirá consejos de tratamiento que en algunas situaciones podrían salvar una vida. Su llamada será atendida por una enfermera, un farmacéutico, o un doctor, todos especializados en toxicología. Todas las llamadas son gratuitas y confidenciales.

Los servicios de los Poison Control Centers están disponibles para personas quienes hablan español (y otros idiomas) así como para personas incapacitadas del oído.

Cuando los profesionales en el campo de la salud necesitan información sobre el tratamiento y la prevención de envenenamiento, también consultan con su Poison Control Center.

**1-800-222-1222**

## Ayudamos a Personas de Todas las Edades — y en Todo Tipo de Situaciones



Cuando los niños juegan con productos de uso doméstico y ocurre un accidente, los expertos de su Poison Control Center están a su alcance con un simple llamada telefónica.



Los Poison Control Centers ayudan a personas de todas las edades si toman una medicina equivocada o una dosis inadecuada.



Los Poison Control Centers dan información sobre como prevenir y tratar emergencias relacionadas con productos químicos o industriales.

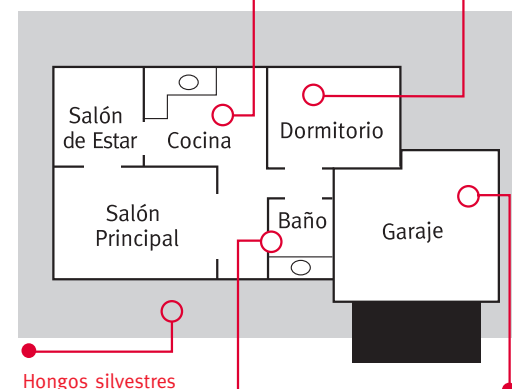
**1-800-222-1222**

## Usted Puede Prevenir Envenenamientos en Su Hogar

Los medicamentos y productos de uso doméstico pueden hacer daño si son usados de manera inapropiada, en cantidades incorrectas, o por las personas no indicadas.

Productos de limpieza para el horno  
Desatascadores de tubería  
Bebidas alcohólicas  
Barniz para los muebles

Medicinas



Hongos silvestres

Pesticidas  
Antioxidantes  
Gasolina  
Keroseno

Productos para limpiar el baño  
Productos para alisar y rizar el cabello  
Productos para las uñas  
Enjuague bucal

Disolvente de pintura  
Líquido de encendedores  
Aceite de lámparas  
Anticongelante  
Líquidos para el parabrisas

**¿Tiene alguna pregunta?**  
**Todas las preguntas sobre envenenamiento son importantes.**  
**Para prevenir un envenenamiento y siempre que tenga duda, llámenos.**

**1-800-222-1222**



# Is it candy●medicine?



**Ibuprofen**



**Good N' Plenty®**



**Multivitamin**



**Good N' Fruity®**



**Amitriptyline**



**Cinnamon Candy**



**Dolobid®**



**Good N' Fruity®**



**Ferrous Sulfate**



**Red Hots®**



**Tegretol®**



**Smarties®**



**Children's Vitamins**



**Tangy Bunnies**



**Depakene**



**Good N' Fruity®**



**Pseudoephedrine**



**Cinnamon Candy**



**Ferrous Gluconate**



**M&M®**



**Amantadine**



**Good N' Fruity®**



**Bethanechol**



**Sweetarts®**



**Aspirin**



**Skittles®**



**Mesoridazine**



**M&M®  
(small)**



**Simethicone Chewable**



**Altoid® Mint**



**Tylenol®**



**Tic Tac®**



**Ephedrine**



**Good N' Plenty®**



**Phenelzine**



**Skittles®**



For a poison emergency, or just a question,  
call your poison control center at

**1-800-222-1222**

Reach poison experts, 24/7. Free and confidential.



# Is it Candy or Medicine

When you have questions about poisonings, call  
the NY State Poison Control Centers.  
Information is provided free of charge.  
Translators are available.

1-800-222-1222



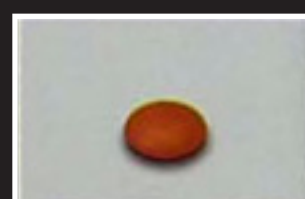
Multivitamin



Good N' Fruity®



Amitriptyline



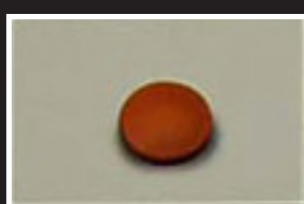
Cinnamon Candy



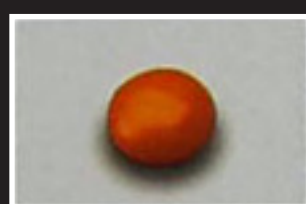
Dolobid®



Good N' Fruity®



Ferrous Sulfate



Red Hots



Tegretol



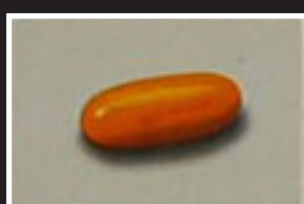
Smarties®



Children's Vitamins



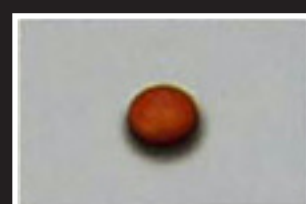
Tangy Bunnies



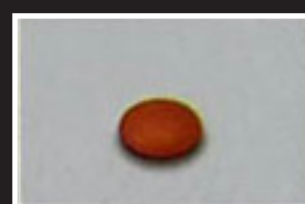
Depakene



Good N' Fruity®



Pseudoephedrine



Cinnamon Candy



Ferrous Gluconate



M&M®



Amantadine



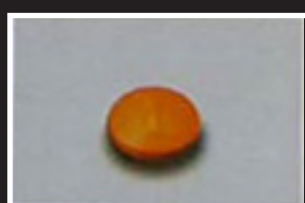
Good N' Fruity®



Bethanechol



Sweetarts®



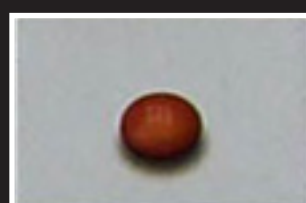
Asprin



Skittles®



Mesoridazine



M&M® (Small)



Simethicone Chewable



Altiod® Mint



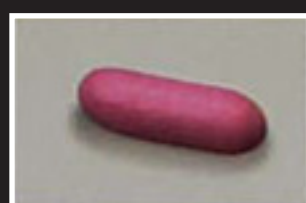
Tylenol®



Tic Tac®



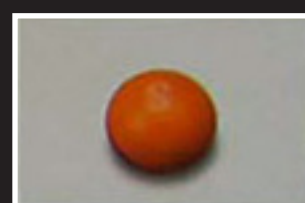
Ephedrine



Good N' Plenty®



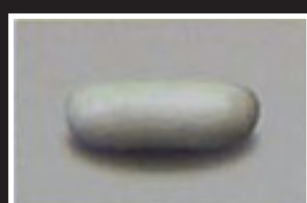
Phenelzine



Skittles®



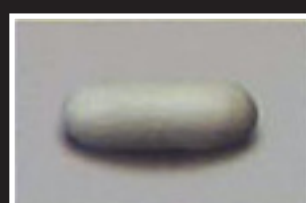
Valproic Acid



Good N' Plenty



Ibuprofen



Good N' Plenty®



# Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



# Workplace

## Hazardous Chemicals Safety

### Background

**Homes, sheds, basements and garages contain potentially hazardous chemicals that should be used, stored, and discarded with special care.**

A hazardous substance means any chemical or mixture that may be harmful to the environment and to human health if inhaled, swallowed, or absorbed through the skin. These substances include items that are valuable for personal care and home and yard maintenance. However, misuse, especially when products are used in inappropriate applications or quantities, can cause illness, injury, and even death.

Some products are easily recognized as a potential source of poisonings, but others may not be as obvious. Many common household products are pesticides. A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. Pests include insects, mice and other animals, unwanted plants (weeds), fungi, or microorganisms like bacteria and viruses.



Not all hazardous chemicals are pesticides. Cosmetics and personal care products such as hairspray, hair remover, fingernail polish and polish remover, hair coloring products, and lice shampoo, are all potentially poisonous.

In the 2007 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System, it is reported that:

- Cosmetics and personal care products were involved in 225,410 exposures
- 172,541 of them in children 5 years old and younger
- Household cleaning products were involved in 216,228 exposures
- 122,832 of them in children 5 years old and younger
- Pesticides were involved in 96,307 exposures
- 44,644 of them in children 5 years old and younger



There are strategies for reducing the risk of poisoning by hazardous household chemicals:

- Read the label prior to buying so you understand its toxicity.
- Only buy the amount that you need.
- Read and follow the instructions proper precautions and use.
- Keep hazardous products, including a cosmetics and personal care products out of the reach of small children.
- Do not leave products unattended or unsealed.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while using hazardous products.
- Make certain all products are clearly labeled before storing them.
- Leave products in their original containers.

These prevention messages can be relayed to employees in a number of ways, including brown bag lunch presentations, safety/health fairs, and payroll stuffers. To get started, review the [Strategies for Implementing the Kit](#).



### Strategies for Implementing the Kit

**Homes, sheds, basements and garages contain potentially hazardous chemicals that should be used, stored, and discarded with special care.**

In 2007, cosmetics and personal care products caused 225,410 poisoning exposures (172,541 – children 5 years old and younger); household cleaners caused 216,228 poisoning exposures (122,832 – children 5 years old and younger); and pesticides caused 96,307 poisoning exposures (44,644 – children 5 years old and younger). This information can be presented in a number of ways and highlighted at different times to educate the public on household hazards. Hazardous chemicals safety awareness should be promoted year-round; however, there are certain times of the year when the number of unintentional poisonings escalates due to specific activities.

Hazard safety messages can be highlighted around:

- **Winter:** Antifreeze is highly hazardous and exposures are common during cold, wintery conditions. Carbon monoxide is also an issue during this time of year.
- **Spring:** Spring cleaning causes an increase in the use of household cleaners and other chemicals, such as pesticides, that can increase the opportunities for unintentional poisonings.
- **National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW):** NPPW is an opportunity during the third week of March to amplify poison prevention, specifically hazardous chemical safety, in a nationwide effort and through local activities.
- **Summer:** Insect-repellant safety should be underscored as exposure to insects causes an escalated use in deet and other repellants. At this time, hurricane season begins, making it important to emphasize safety when using generators, a potential source of carbon monoxide. Pool, spa, lawn and garden chemicals are also prevalent in the summer.
- **Fall:** This is a crucial time to emphasize medication safety as medicine consumption rises during cold and flu season.

Various poison prevention messages can be used to underscore the importance of hazardous chemicals safety, especially during specific times of the year. Below are ways to relay prevention messages to employees and their families. Click on the link to find more details on organizing each type of event.

## **Brown Bag Lunch Presentations**

If the staff is not very large, or it is possible to have the staff attend in small groups (5 to 25 people), brown bag lunch presentations are a very effective way to provide information to employees. The presentation can be a PowerPoint slide show or it can be in an interactive quiz format. Both can stimulate discussion, and fact sheets and brochures can be provided for employees to take home.

## **Safety or Health Fair**

If the staff is too large to accommodate the brown bag lunch type of presentation, providing the information through a fair could be effective. Many large companies already have safety or health fairs for their employees and poison prevention can be a display. If the company does not have its own fair, it might be possible to partner with community safety or health fairs, or to have a display at a county or state fair. The PowerPoint [Room by Room Safety Check](#) presentation or [Fact or Fiction](#) can play continuously to draw people to the booth; attendees can participate in the interactive quiz, test themselves with the flip chart, and receive handouts to take home to their families.

## **Bring Your Child to Work Day**

Many companies set aside a day when employees are invited to bring their child to work with them. Although part of the day is spent explaining what the parent does, some companies have found this a perfect opportunity to discuss safety and health issues that can effect the whole family. Hazardous chemicals safety would be a good topic to include in those discussions. A display can be set up in the lobby, a large office, conference room, lunch room, or classroom. Parents and children can be invited to stop by and engage in the interactive activities or children can participate in group activities. They can also be provided materials to take home.

## **Intranet Pages**

Many companies use their Intranet (an internal version of the Internet) to keep their employees up to date on company policies, events, safety information, and other important information. The fact sheets and brochures contained in this kit can be uploaded to the Intranet. Some of them can be highlighted during national observances, such as [Preventing Hazardous Chemical Poisonings](#) can be highlighted during National Poison Prevention Week (the third week of March) or [Disposal of Hazardous Products](#) can be highlighted in the spring when people are engaged in spring cleaning.

## **Payroll Stuffers**

Another way to reach all employees is through payroll envelopes. Tri-fold brochures that give important information about reading the labels of hazardous household chemicals may be used. There are four included here:

- [Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Household](#)



- [Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Kids](#)
- [Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Pets](#)
- [Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Garden](#)

Many people have the misperception that the poison control centers are only for children, but every teen and adult – whether they have children or not – should be aware of the number and the service the centers provide. These brochures are available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), and can be obtained by calling the poison control center number (800-222-1222) and asking for the poison educator.

# Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



# Workplace

## Hazardous Chemicals Safety

### Brown Bag Lunch

- Objective:** Raise employees' understanding of hazardous household chemicals and ways to reduce the risks to themselves and their families.
- Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes
- Setting:** Conference room, lunch room, classroom
- Equipment:** Laptop computer, LCD projector, screen or blank wall
- Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, practice with PowerPoints, choose which materials to hand out, and read them prior to the presentation
- Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentations: Room by Room Safety Check](#)  
[PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Common Hazardous Household Chemicals](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Understanding the Terms](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Safer Alternatives](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Disposal of Hazardous Products](#)
- Marketing:** Place a "Coming Soon" flyer on bulletin boards or in lunch room; make an announcement on Intranet (one month in advance, and the weekly reminders); payroll stuffer announcements; employee newsletter. If the budget allows, provide lunch to increase attendance.

# Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



# Workplace

## Hazardous Chemicals Safety

### Safety or Health Fair

**Objective:** Raise employees' understanding of hazardous household chemicals and ways to reduce the risks to themselves and their families.

**Time Needed:** Half day to whole day

**Setting:** Cafeteria, conference room, lobby (if on-site); community center, school, library, fairgrounds or other large site open to the public (if off-site)

**Equipment:** Laptop computer

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, become familiar with the material in the handouts, and call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) to receive additional materials and items (magnets, stickers, etc.) to hand out.

You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

**Materials:**

- [PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)
- [Flip Chart: Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room](#)
- [Flip Chart: True or False](#)
- [Children's Activity: Create a Label](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Common Hazardous Household Chemicals](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Understanding the Terms](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Safer Alternatives](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Disposal of Hazardous Products](#)
- [Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Household](#)
- [Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Kids](#)
- [Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Pets](#)
- [Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Garden](#)

**Marketing:** Place a "Coming Soon" flyer on bulletin boards or in lunch room; make an announcement on Intranet (one month in advance, and the weekly reminders); payroll stuffer announcements; employee newsletter



# Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



# Workplace

## Hazardous Chemicals Safety

### Bring Your Child to Work Day

**Objective:** Raise employees' understanding of hazardous household chemicals and ways to reduce the risks to themselves and their families.

**Time Needed:** Half day to whole day

**Setting:** Cafeteria, large classroom (if on site) or community center, school, fairgrounds (if partnering off site)

**Equipment:** Laptop computer

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, become familiar with the material in the handouts, and call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) to receive additional materials and items (magnets, stickers, etc.) to hand out.

You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

**Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentations: Room by Room Safety Check](#)  
[PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Flip Chart: Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room](#)  
[Flip Chart: True or False](#)  
[Children's Activity: Create a Label](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Common Hazardous Household Chemicals](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Understanding the Terms](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Safer Alternatives](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Disposal of Hazardous Products](#)

**Marketing:** Place a "Coming Soon" flyer on bulletin boards or in lunch room; make an announcement on Intranet (one month in advance, and the weekly reminders); payroll stuffer announcements; employee newsletter.



# **Room by Room Safety Check**

You can keep yourself and family members safer by being aware of potential hazards and observing these suggestions on ways to poison-proof your home.

Try going through your home down at child's level and looking at everything from their point of view.



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Bathroom

Some items that might be found in the bathroom include:

- Medicines
- Cosmetics
- Nail polisher and removers
- Hair care products
- Toothpaste with fluoride
- Perfume
- Tile cleaner
- Toilet bowl cleaners
- Bathroom deodorizers
- Mouthwash
- Personal hygiene products



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Bedroom

Some items that might be found in the bedroom include:

- Mothballs
- Cosmetics
- Hair sprays
- Perfumes
- Mouthwash
- Colognes
- Deodorants
- Nail polish and remover
- Medicines



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Living Room

Some items that might be found in the living room include:

- Medications in coat pockets and purses
- Furniture polish
- Home Fragrant Products
- Pesticides tracked in from the lawn
- Lead-based paint on window sills



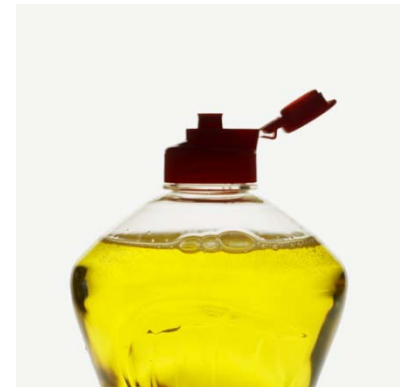
Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Kitchen

Some items that might be found in the kitchen include:

- Dishwashing detergent
- Liquid dish soap
- Scouring soap
- Disinfectants
- Window cleaners
- Oven cleaners
- Medicines
- Vitamins
- Ammonia
- Bug spray
- Furniture polish
- Drain cleaners/openers
- Rust removers
- Floor wax
- Metal polish
- Wax remover



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

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# Laundry Room

Some items that might be found in the laundry room include:

- Laundry detergent
- Bleach
- Fabric softener
- Stain removers
- Dye



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

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# Garage

Some items that might be found in the garage include:

- Gasoline
- Kerosene
- Car wax
- Car soaps
- Weed killers
- Pesticides
- Paint
- Windshield washer fluid
- Brake fluid
- Antifreeze



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

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Many poisonings of young children happen when the household routine has been interrupted, such as:

- when a parent is ill
- when a family is moving
- when a family is on a trip
- when there is a guest in the home
- when there is family tension
- when seasonal products are in use

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Medication Tips

- Medicine cabinets are not a good place to store medications.
- Visitors may carry medications in coat pockets and purses.
- Have a child-proof cabinet for medicines that locks.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Personal Care Items

- Some mouthwashes contain enough alcohol to poison small children.
- Mothballs and crystals should be hung in containers.
- If children are present, it is best if personal care items are kept out of their reach.
- Home fragrant products can be attractive to children and may post a hazard.

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# Cleansers & Detergents

- Some disinfectants and toilet bowl cleaners are dangerously caustic.
- Never store cleaning compounds and foods on the same shelf.
- Never mix cleaning compounds together.
- Keep all substances in their original containers.
- Cap all cleaning compounds while using.
- Clean up spills and leaks immediately and store products properly.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Pesticides

- Use traps, baits or gels instead of pesticides sprays and foggers.
- Get rid of old pesticides that may no longer be registered for residential use.
- Never use illegal pesticides.
- Pesticides can accumulate in carpets when they are tracked into the house.
- Install safety latches on the lower cupboard doors to keep children out.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Keep the nationwide poison  
control center's number  
(800) 222-1222  
beside every phone in your  
home and programmed into  
your cell phone.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# **Fact or Fiction?**



**Bleach and cleaners are the only hazardous household chemicals.**

**FICTION:** There are many types of hazardous household chemicals including items for personal care and home and yard maintenance.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Most poisoning deaths occur in children ages 5 and younger.**

**FICTION:** Children are only 2 percent of the poisoning deaths.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**If you only have a little bit of a household chemical left, it is best to put it into a smaller container.**

**FICTION:** Keep products in original containers so it is not confused with another product. Also you may need the label in case of a poisoning.

# CAUTION, WARNING, and DANGER all have the different meanings on a package.

**FACT:** Each term has a very specific meaning as determined by EPA.

- **CAUTION:** lowest level of potential harm.
- **WARNING:** can cause serious illness.
- **DANGER:** highest level of potential harm.

**It is okay to combine household cleaners to make a stronger cleaner.**

**FICTION:** Never mix chemicals. Doing so can create a poisonous gas.

**The best way to dispose of hazardous chemicals is to pour them down the drain.**

**FICTION:** Hazardous household chemicals should NEVER be discarded on the ground or poured into storm drains.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**You should not wear contact lenses when using solvents or pesticides.**

**FACT:** Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when working with solvents and pesticides because they can absorb vapors from the air and hold the chemicals against your eyes.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**All pesticides sold in the United States are regulated and legal.**

**FICTION:** There is a rising problem in the sale of illegal pesticides.



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# The staff of the poison control centers are all poison experts.

**FACT:** Poison centers are staffed by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists. Everyone answering calls is trained in poisoning and most are certified specialists in poison information.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Poison centers are not just for children; they should be used for adults as well.**

**FACT:** 50.7% of poisonings occur in children under age 6, BUT almost 90% of poisoning deaths occur in adults ages 20 and older.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



### Interactive Exhibit Ideas

**DO NOT walk away from a display if you have poisons on the table!**

Many poison prevention educators have developed displays and games that they use to educate the public on various aspects of poison prevention. Call the nationwide toll-free poison prevention number – 800-222-1222 – to talk with your local poison educator about their displays and games. Many of the local poison control centers have educational materials available on their website. Go the website for the American Association of Poison Control Centers, <http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/>, and click on the “Find Local Poison Center” to find information about your local poison control center.

**Below are some suggestions for activities and displays that you can make and use.**

#### Create a Label

This activity is designed to help children learn about the labels on hazardous chemicals found in the home. Start by going over the information on the sheet and then have the children design a label that covers the material. You will need to supply poster boards, crayons, paints, and other art supplies.

#### Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room Flip Chart

Print out the questions and answers for the [Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room Flip Chart](#) on cover stock (heavy paper) with each question and answer on a separate piece of paper. Laminate the sheets and punch three holes in top of the sheets. Place the sheets in a ½” or 1” three ring binder. This will hold the pages together, but allow the pages to be flipped. To get the display to stand on the table, fold the notebook inside out so the rings are facing upward. Put the first part of the Velcro dots in the two outside corners of both the front and back covers of the binders. Put the second part of the Velcro dots on both ends of two pieces of ribbons that are about 5” to 6” long. Then join the ribbons to the Velcro dots that are in the corners. This will form a tent that will allow the questions and answers to be read then flipped over.

## True or False Flipchart

Print out the questions and answers for the [True or False Flipchart](#) on cover stock (heavy paper) with each question and answer on a separate piece of paper.

Laminate the sheets and punch three holes in top of the sheets. Place the sheets in a ½" or 1" three ring binder. This will hold the pages together, but allow the pages to be flipped. To get the display to stand on the table, fold the notebook inside out so the rings are facing upward. Put the first part of the Velcro dots in the two outside corners of both the front and back covers of the binders. Put the second part of the Velcro dots on both ends of two pieces of ribbons that are about 5" to 6" long. Then join the ribbons to the Velcro dots that are in the corners. This will form a tent that will allow the questions and answers to be read then flipped over.



# Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room

In each room, try to identify what hazardous chemicals might be present.  
Flip the card to check your answer.

**Good Luck!**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Bathroom



Hint: At least  
11 items.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Bathroom

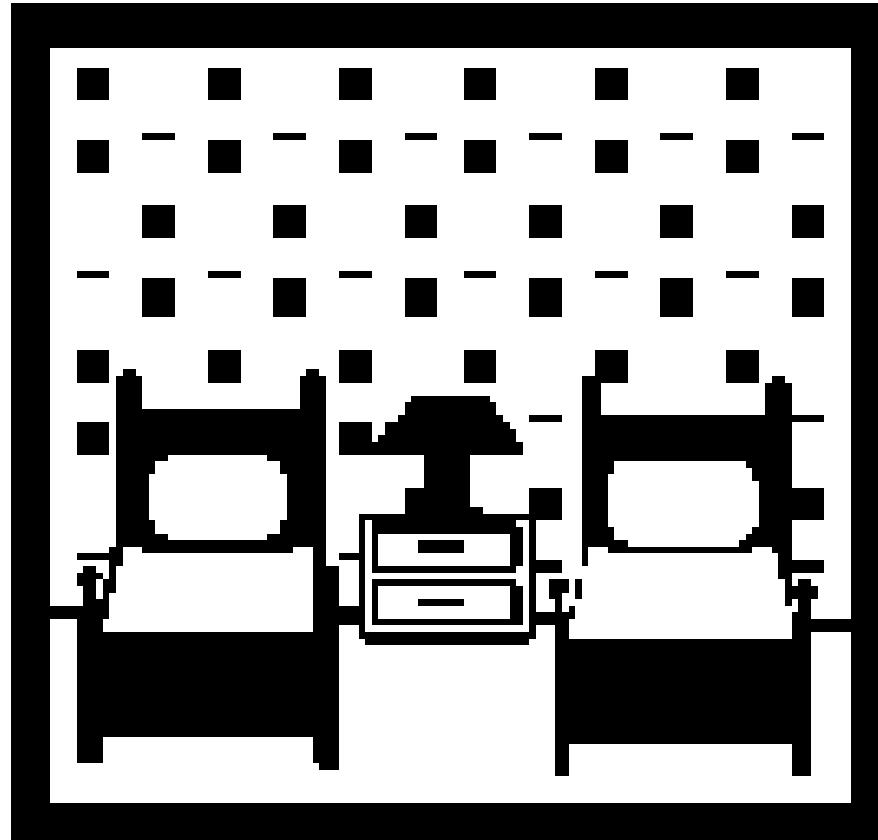
- Medicines
- Cosmetics
- Nail polisher and removers
- Hair care products
- Toothpaste with fluoride
- Perfume
- Tile cleaner
- Toilet bowl cleaners
- Bathroom deodorizers
- Mouthwash
- Personal hygiene products

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# Bedroom

- Hint: At least 9 items.



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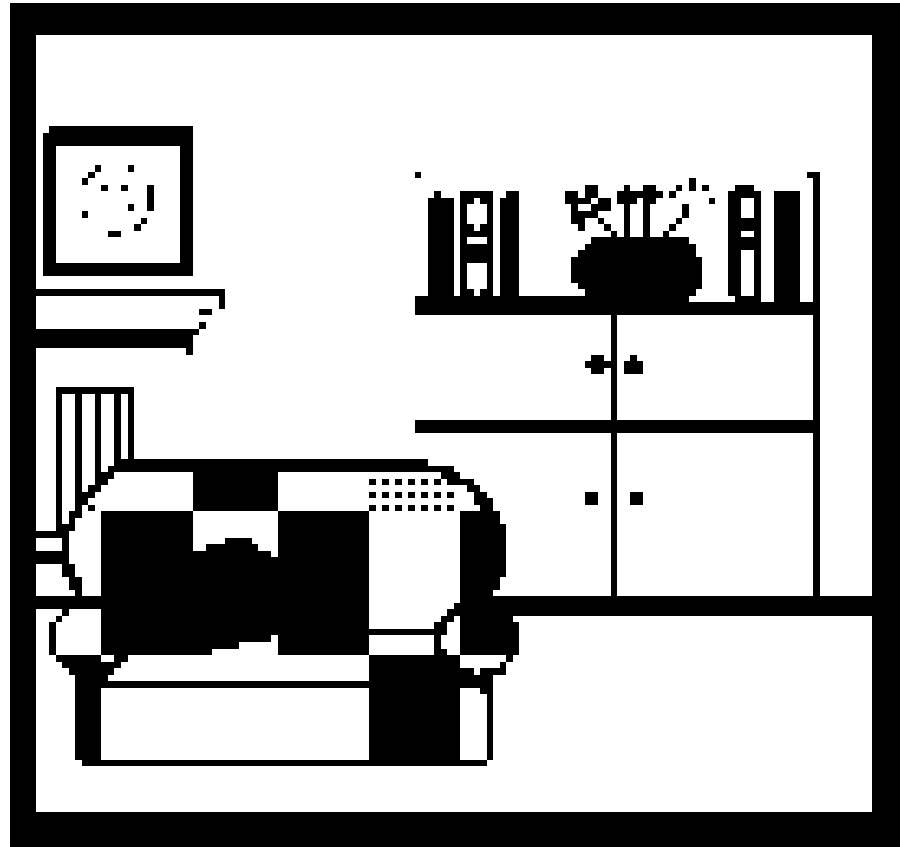
# Bedroom

- Mothballs
- Cosmetics
- Hair sprays
- Perfumes
- Colognes
- Deodorants
- Nail polish and remover
- Medicines
- Carbon monoxide

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
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# Living Room

- Hint: At least 7 items.



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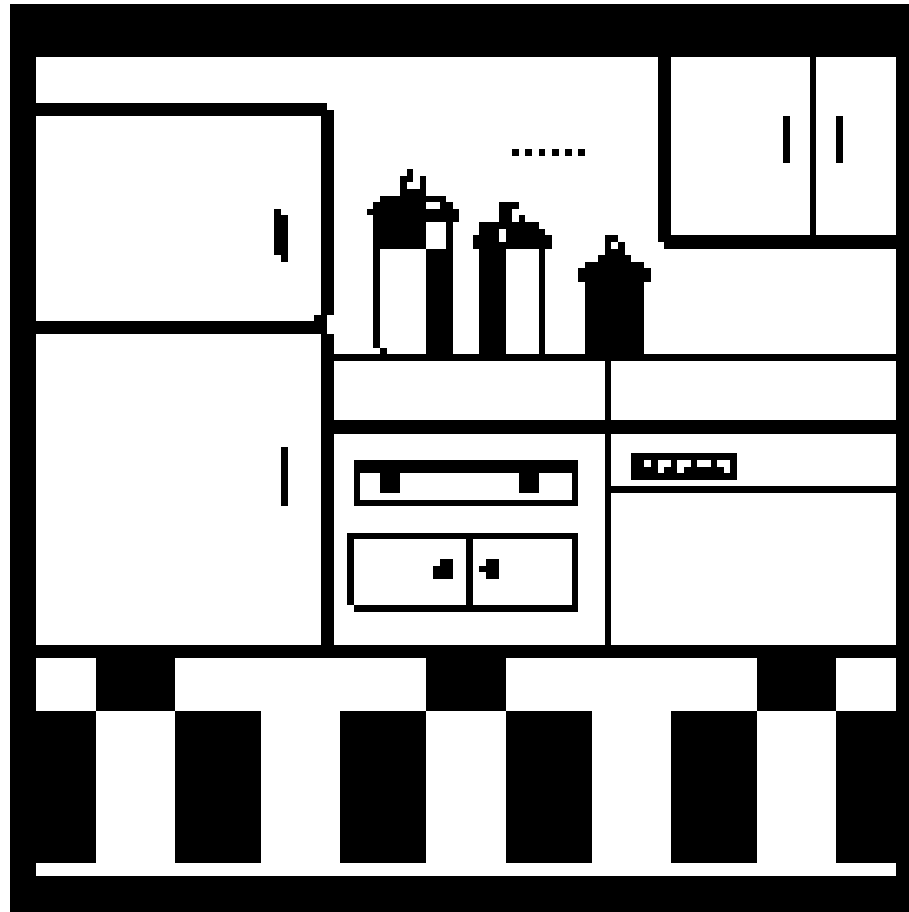
# Living Room

- Medications in coat pockets and purses
- Furniture polish
- Home Fragrant Products
- Workplace chemicals and pesticides tracked in from the outside
- Lead-based paint on window sills
- Toxic plants

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Kitchen

- Hint: At least 16 items.



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Kitchen

- Dishwashing detergent
- Liquid dish soap
- Scouring soap
- Disinfectants
- Window cleaners
- Oven cleaners
- Medicines
- Vitamins
- Furniture polisher
- Drain cleaners/ openers
- Ammonia
- Bug spray
- Rust removers
- Floor wax
- Metal polish
- Wax remover

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Laundry Room



- Hint: At least 5 items.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Laundry Room

- Laundry detergent
- Bleach
- Fabric softener
- Stain removers
- Dye

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# Garage



- Hint: At least 11 items.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Garage

- Gasoline
- Kerosene
- Car wax
- Car soaps
- Weed killers
- Pesticides
- Paint
- Windshield washer fluid
- Brake fluid
- Antifreeze
- Carbon monoxide

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



## True or False?

Answer True or False to each question  
and then flip the card to check your answer.

**Good Luck!**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**A hazardous substance is any chemical that may be harmful if inhaled, swallowed, or comes in contact with the eyes or skin.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True:

They include items for personal care, home and yard maintenance. Misuse can cause illness, injury, and even death.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Pesticides are the only hazardous chemicals in the home.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## False:

Some of the most common household products can be very hazardous, including:

- cleaning substances
- personal care products
- garden supplies
- automotive products
- hobby materials
- fuels
- paints
- pool products

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**Most poisoning deaths occur in  
children ages 6 and younger.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:**

Children are only 2 percent of the poisoning deaths.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**If you only have a little bit of a household chemical left, it is best to put it into a smaller container.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## **False:**

Keep products in original containers so it is not confused with another product.  
Also you may need the label in case of a poisoning.

**CAUTION, WARNING, and DANGER**  
all have the different meanings on a  
package.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True:

Each term has a very specific meaning as determined by EPA.

- **CAUTION:** lowest level of potential harm.
- **WARNING:** can cause serious illness.
- **DANGER:** highest level of potential harm.

**It is okay to combine household  
cleaners to make a stronger cleaner.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:**

Never mix chemicals. Doing so can create a poisonous gas.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**The best way to dispose of hazardous chemicals is to pour them down the drain, rinse out the bottle, and throw it in the trash.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## **False:**

Hazardous household chemicals should NEVER be discarded on the ground or poured into storm drains. These products should be saved and taken to Household Hazardous Waste collections.

**You should not wear contact lenses  
when using solvents or pesticides.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True:

Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when working with solvents and pesticides because they can absorb vapors from the air and hold the chemical against your eyes.

**All pesticides sold in the United States are regulated and legal.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## **False:**

There is a rising problem in the sale of illegal pesticides. Only buy pesticides when the label says registered with the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Legal pesticides are only safe if  
used as directed.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True:**

All safety statements are linked to correct usage.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**The staff of the poison control  
centers are all poison experts.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True:

Poison centers are staffed by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists. Everyone answering calls is trained in poisoning and most are certified specialists in poison information.

Poison centers are not just for children; they should be used for adults as well.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True:**

50.7% of poisonings occur in children under age 6, BUT almost 90% of poisoning deaths occur in adults ages 20 and older.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
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### Children's Activities: Create a Label

This activity is designed for children ages 10 and older to help them learn about the labels found on hazardous chemicals found in the home. It can be conducted as a contest with winners for the best design or as an activity at a fair.

Many common household products can be poisonous. This includes products such as kitchen, laundry, and bath disinfectants, cockroach sprays and baits, products that kill mold and mildew, flea and tick sprays and powders, pet collars, insect repellants, rat poison, some lawn and garden products, and some swimming pool chemicals.

The labels of the products contain a lot of important information. There is information such as how dangerous it can be, how much to buy, how to use it, how to store, and how to get rid of the empty containers. But all labels don't look alike, and they don't have all the same information.

Using a piece of poster board, make a poster showing how you think a label should look. Include all the information you think is important, and place this information in the label. Think about the size of the words, the colors you should use, and what part should be on top. Think about where all the information should be placed on the container. Should it be in front, on the back, or on the side? Design your label so people will read ***all of it***.

# Fact Sheet

## Common Hazardous Household Chemicals

Many products used regularly in the home are not easily recognized as hazardous, especially since some are used on our bodies. However, if misused they can be dangerous.

Here is a list of some of the more common hazardous household chemicals.

- **Health and beauty products** (hairspray, hair remover, fingernail polish, fingernail polish remover, hair coloring products, medications, lice shampoo, etc.).
- **Automotive fluids** (oil, anti-freeze, fuel, brake fluid, windshield washer fluid, transmission fluid, car wash and polish, tar and bug remover etc.)
- **Household cleaners** (bleach, ammonia, dish soap, disinfectants, carpet and upholstery cleaner, carpet freshener, air freshener, window cleaner, furniture polish, oven cleaner, toilet bowl cleaners, mold and mildew remover).
- **Laundry products** (bleach, laundry detergent, fabric softener, etc)
- **Lawn and garden products** (fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, gasoline, oil, etc.)
- **Barbecue products** (propane, charcoal briquettes, lighter fluid, etc.)
- **Home maintenance** (paint, varnish, stains, oils, mouse/rat poison, drain cleaner)
- **Pet maintenance** (flea collar or powder, tick powder, pet shampoo)

# Fact Sheet

## Understanding the Terms

**It is important to read a chemical product's label, understanding its proper use and proper storage.**

The label of a product will indicate the level of toxicity and precautions that should be taken when used. All the terms do not have the same meaning.

**CAUTION** indicates the lowest level of potential harm. It means that the product is not likely to produce permanent damage as a result of exposure, if appropriate first aid is given. The eye or skin could become inflamed, or adverse effects, such as dizziness or stomach upset, could occur if the product is swallowed or inhaled.

**WARNING** indicates a higher level of potential harm than CAUTION, meaning that you could become seriously ill or harmed. It also is used to identify products that can easily catch on fire. These products are required by law to be in child-resistant packaging.

**DANGER** indicates the highest level of potential harm. Unintentional exposure of the eye or skin of the product could produce tissue damage. Swallowing the product could produce damage to the mouth, throat, and stomach or even death. This word is also used if the material could explode if exposed to an open flame. These products are required by law to be in child-resistant packaging. You may also find a skull-and-crossbones symbol along with words "DANGER-POISON" on certain pesticide products. This means the product can harm the whole body.

**POISON** indicates that it can injure or kill if absorbed through the skin, ingested or inhaled.

**TOXIC** means it can cause injury or death if swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin.

**IRRITANT** indicates it causes soreness or swelling of skin, eyes, mucous membranes, or respiratory system.

**FLAMMABLE** means it easily catches on fire and tends to burn rapidly.

**FLAMMABLE LIQUID** means it catches on fire below 140°F (100°F for US DOT purposes).



**COMBUSTIBLE LIQUID** indicates it has catches on fire from 140°F (100°F for US DOT purposes) to 200°F.

**CORROSIVE** indicates a chemical or its vapors that can cause a material or living tissue to be destroyed.

# Fact Sheet

## Safer Alternatives

Before buying or using a potentially hazardous household chemical, check to see if there is a safer alternative. This could also be less expensive and better for the environment.

For this:	Try this:
<b>Air freshener</b>	Simmer cinnamon and cloves; leave opened box of baking soda in room; or set out a dish of vinegar.
<b>All purpose cleaner</b>	Dissolve 4 tablespoons baking soda in 1 quart warm water for a cleaning solution or use baking soda sprinkled on a damp sponge.
<b>Aluminum spot remover</b>	To remove stains and discoloration from aluminum cookware, fill cookware with hot water, add 2 tablespoons cream of tartar to each quart of water, bring solution to a boil and simmer ten minutes, and wash as usual and dry.
<b>Ants</b>	Sprinkle red chili powder or cream of tartar at point of entry. Boric acid will also kill ants when spread liberally around the points of entry. Boric acid has some toxicity and should not be applied to areas where small children and animals are likely to contact it.
<b>Bleach</b>	Substitute Borax.
<b>Blood stains</b>	Rinse or sponge blood stains immediately with club soda, repeat as necessary, and wash as usual.
<b>Brass polish</b>	Clean and polish unlacquered brass with a soft cloth dampened with Worcestershire sauce.
<b>Car battery corrosion</b>	Make a paste of baking soda and water, apply to corrosion, and rinse off.
<b>Chocolate stains</b>	Rinse or sponge chocolate stains immediately with club soda, repeat as necessary, and wash as usual.
<b>Chrome polish</b>	Apply apple cider vinegar and then polish with baby oil
<b>Cleaners (general household)</b>	Clean with a mixture of 1/2 cup ammonia, 1/3 cup vinegar, and 1/4 cup baking soda in one gallon of warm water.
<b>Coffee stains</b>	Rub coffee stains gently with moist salt.
<b>Coffee pot stain</b>	To remove stains in coffee, soak it in vinegar.
<b>Copper cleaner</b>	Clean copper by rubbing gently with lemon juice and salt.
<b>Decal remover</b>	To remove a decal, soak it in white vinegar.
<b>Drain cleaner</b>	Put 1/2 cup baking soda, then 1/2 cup white vinegar down your



<b>For this:</b>	<b>Try this:</b>
	drain, cover the drain, let set for a few minutes, and then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain to flush it.
<b>Fertilizer</b>	Use compost and vermin-compost instead of fertilizers.
<b>Fiberglass stain remover</b>	To remove stains from fiberglass, rub it with baking soda paste.
<b>Flea &amp; tick repellent</b>	To repel ticks and fleas, scatter pine needles, fennel, rye or rosemary on pet's bed.
<b>Floor cleaner</b>	Clean with a mixture of 1 cup vinegar mixed with 2 gallons of water.
<b>Furniture polish</b>	To polish furniture, mix 2 parts olive oil with 1 part lemon juice, apply to the furniture, and polish with a soft cloth.
<b>Garbage disposal deodorizers</b>	Grind citrus rind or ice cubes to remove odors from garbage disposal.
<b>Gold &amp; Silver polish</b>	To clean tarnish off gold and silver (not silver plate), apply toothpaste with a soft toothbrush or cloth, rinse with clean warm water, and polish dry.
<b>Grease fire</b>	To put out a grease fire, douse with baking soda.
<b>Grease removal</b>	Use Borax on damp cloth to remove grease.
<b>Hand cleaner for paint/grease</b>	To remove paint or grease from hands, rub with baby oil.
<b>Ink spot remover</b>	To remove an ink spot, put cream of tartar on the stain, squeeze a few drops of lemon juice over it, rub it in for a minute, brush off the powder, and sponge with warm water or launder.
<b>Insects on plants</b>	Apply soapy water on leaves and then rinse.
<b>Lime and mineral deposit remover</b>	<p>Hard lime deposits around faucets can be softened for easy removal by covering the deposits with vinegar-soaked rags or paper towels. Leave rags or paper towels on for about 1 hour before cleaning.</p> <p>To remove deposits that may be clogging metal shower heads, combine 1/2 cup white vinegar with 1 quart water, completely submerge the shower head and boil for 15 minutes. If you have a plastic shower head, combine 1 pint white vinegar with 1 pint hot water, completely submerge the shower head, and soak for about 1 hour.</p>
<b>Mildew remover</b>	Clean mildew with a mixture of equal parts of vinegar and salt.
<b>Mosquito repellent</b>	Burn citronella candles to keep mosquitoes away.
<b>Moth repellent</b>	Use cedar chips or dried lavender enclosed in cotton sachets in closets or storage trunks to keep moths out.

<b>For this:</b>	<b>Try this:</b>
<b>Nematode (parasitic worm) repellent</b>	Plant marigolds in garden to repel nematodes.
<b>Oil stain remover</b>	To remove oil stains, rub white chalk into stain before laundering.
<b>Oven cleaner</b>	Clean ovens with mixture of 2 tablespoons liquid soap, 2 teaspoons borax, and warm water
<b>Paint brush softener</b>	Soften paint brushes by soaking them in hot vinegar.
<b>Perspiration spot remover</b>	Remove perspiration spots by rubbing with baking soda.
<b>Refrigerator deodorizer</b>	An open box of baking soda will get rid of odors in the refrigerator.
<b>Roach repellent</b>	Sprinkle entry points with chopped bay leaves and cucumber skins. Boric acid will also kill ants when spread liberally around the points of entry. Boric acid has some toxicity and should not be applied to areas where small children and animals are likely to contact it.
<b>Rust removal (clothing)</b>	Rub rust spot with a mixture of lemon juice and salt and then place in sunlight.
<b>Rust removal (bolt/nut)</b>	Soak bolts or nuts in carbonated beverage to remove rust.
<b>Slug and snail repellent</b>	Plant onions and marigolds in garden to repel slugs and snails.
<b>Stainless steel polish</b>	Polish stainless steel by rubbing with mineral oil.
<b>Toilet bowl cleaner</b>	Clean toilet bowl by rubbing with a paste of borax and lemon juice.
<b>Tub and tile cleaner</b>	Clean tub and tile by rubbing with a mixture of 1/4 cup baking soda, 1/2 cup white vinegar, and warm water
<b>Upholstery spot removal</b>	Remove spots on upholstery by rubbing with club soda.
<b>Wine stain removal</b>	Remove wine stains by rubbing with salt.
<b>Window cleaner</b>	Clean windows with a mixture of 1/2 cup of vinegar in 1 gallon of warm water.
<b>Wood polish</b>	Polish interior unvarnished wood by rubbing with a mixture of 3 parts olive oil and 1 part white vinegar.

# Fact Sheet

## Disposal of Hazardous Products

**Leftover products can poison someone; do not purchase more than is needed for the job.**

Households purchase almost 400 potentially hazardous products in a year. These products tend to be stockpiled in garages, under sinks, in cabinets, and sheds. These forgotten products can become a poison risk. Only buy enough of the product for the job needed.

Products should NEVER be discarded on the ground or poured into storm drains. Many products shouldn't even be disposed of in the trash or down the toilet. These products should be saved and taken to Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections.

Disposal instructions and reuse and recycling capabilities vary from municipality to municipality. Limiting the amount of hazardous waste materials or removing them from the solid waste stream allows municipalities to reduce the potential for unintentional exposures to sanitation workers, materials recovery facility workers, landfill workers, and the environment. For more information on disposal of hazardous products where you live, call Earth 911 at 800-CLEANUP, or visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org), and type in "hazardous waste" and your zip code to find the nearest disposal site.

General guidance for disposal:

### Products in pressurized containers

- Do not puncture or incinerate!
- **If empty:** Place in trash or offer for recycling if available.
- **If partly filled:** Call the local solid waste agency for disposal instructions.

### Products in non-pressurized containers

This includes liquids and solids (tablets, dusts, gels, pet products, etc.) in all other types of product containers (e.g., bags, boxes, bottles, cans, bait stations, squeeze tubes, etc.)

- **If empty:** Do not reuse this container. Place in trash or offer for recycling if available.



- **If partly filled:** Call your local solid waste agency for disposal instructions. Never place unused product down any indoor or outdoor drain.



### Preventing Hazardous Chemical Poisonings

Poisonings can be prevented, but if one occurs, call the nationwide toll-free number for poison centers, 1-800-222-1222, immediately.

Take the following steps to prevent poisonings.

#### When buying a potentially hazardous chemical:

- Look for safer alternatives to hazardous products.
- Buy the least hazardous product.
- Buy only as much as you need to do the job at hand.
- Beware that "nontoxic" products can still contain hazardous ingredients.
- Read the entire label carefully, especially for additional health warnings.
- Buy hazardous products in child-resistant packaging.
- Avoid aerosol products because the droplets can be deeply inhaled into the lungs and quickly absorbed into the bloodstream.

#### When using a potentially hazardous chemical:

- Read all labels before using hazardous products, paying careful attention to proper use instructions and dangers.
- Twice as much does not mean improved results.
- Do not mix chemicals because it can cause explosive or poisonous chemical reactions.
- If pregnant, avoid toxic chemical exposure. Many toxic products have not been tested for their effects on unborn children.
- During use, keep hazardous products out of the reach of small children. Do not leave products unattended or unsealed.
- Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when working with solvents and pesticides because they can absorb vapors from the air and hold the chemical against your eyes.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while using hazardous products. Traces of hazardous chemicals can be carried from hand to mouth. Smoking can start a fire if the product is flammable.
- Use products in well-ventilated areas to avoid inhaling fumes.
- Use protective gloves, goggles and respirators that are appropriate to the task if the product presents hazards to skin, eyes or lungs.
- Clean up after using hazardous products. Carefully seal products and properly refasten all caps.

### **When storing a potentially hazardous chemical:**

- Keep products out of the reach of children and animals. Store all hazardous products away from food items in locked cabinets or in cabinets with childproof latches.
- Make sure lids and caps are tightly sealed and childproof.
- Make certain all products are clearly labeled before storing them.
- Leave products in their original containers with the contents clearly identified on the labels. Never put hazardous products in food or beverage containers.
- Keep products away from sources of heat, spark, flame or ignition such as pilot lights, switches and motors. This is especially important with flammable products and aerosol cans.
- Store products containing volatile chemicals, or those that warn of vapors or fumes, in a well-ventilated area.
- Never store rags contaminated with flammable solvents because they can spontaneously start on fire. Follow the directions on the product label regarding the disposal of solvent-covered rags. If there are no directions, place the rags in an airtight, metal container and store the container outside your house away from other structures until it can be picked up with the trash.
- Store gasoline and liquid propane gas tanks only in safety-approved containers in a well-ventilated area away from all sources of heat, flame, or spark.
- Keep a working ABC-rated, or Multi-Purpose Dry Chemical, fire extinguisher in your home.
- Keep containers dry to prevent corrosion.

### **Steps for cleaning up spills of potentially hazardous chemicals:**

1. Remove children and pets from the area where the spill occurred.
2. Ventilate the area.
3. Do not attempt to use cleaning products to clean up the spill.
4. At a minimum, wear the appropriate protective gloves for the product. Other safety equipment may be required for volatile solvents, pesticides or corrosive products.
5. Contain the spill to a small area by soaking it up with a non-flammable absorbent material, such as clay-based kitty litter.
6. Put the contaminated material into a non-corroding container. A plastic bucket with a tight-fitting lid is recommended.
7. Seal the container and label it with the product name, approximate amount of product, absorbent material used, date, and the word DANGER or POISON.
8. Contact local solid waste authorities for information on how to dispose of the contaminated material or save for a household hazardous waste collection (call [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com) for more information).
9. After the spill has been absorbed, thoroughly rinse the area several times with water and rags. Then wash the area carefully to remove remaining traces of the product.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a [handout](#).**

## KEEP YOUR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SAFE— READ THE LABEL FIRST!

- ✓ Always keep products in their original containers.
- ✓ Reading the label can help the environment.
- ✓ Know where to call for help. Have your local poison control center number handy by the phone, along with the product label.

## SAVE MONEY BY READING THE LABEL.

- ✓ Buy the right product for the job.
- ✓ Buy the right amount for your needs.

Developed by the Consumer Labeling Initiative:  
A Government, Industry, and Public Partnership.

Visit our Web site at:

**[www.epa.gov/oppt/labeling](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/labeling)**

For more information call:

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network  
800 858-7378

National Antimicrobial Information Network  
800 447-6349



# Read the Label *First!*

PROTECT YOUR HOUSEHOLD



The Consumer Labeling Initiative:  
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# Read the Label *First!*

**M**any household products such as cleaners and pesticides could harm children, pets or the environment if not used and stored correctly. Simply reading a product's label will help you keep your family, pets, and community safe. Reading the label can even save you money.

## KEEP YOUR FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SAFE

### READ THE LABEL FIRST!

Labels tell you:

- ▶ How to use a product safely and effectively.
- ▶ How to store the product safely.
- ▶ First aid instructions.
- ▶ Phone numbers to call for help or more information.

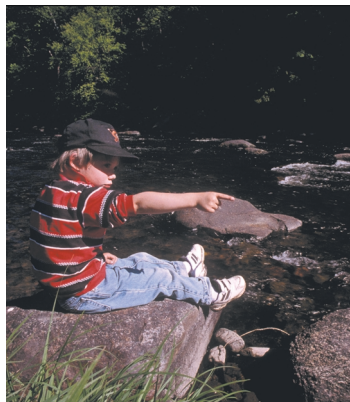
### ALWAYS KEEP PRODUCTS IN ORIGINAL CONTAINERS.

- ▶ It is very dangerous to put products in food and beverage containers. Children think that something in a familiar juice or soda bottle is good to drink.
- ▶ If you throw away the original container, you throw away important information needed in case of an emergency.



- ▶ If there is an accident, you need information on the original label to help with treatment.
- ▶ If the label tells you to mix a product in another container, use all of the mixture. If you can't use all the mixture, label the new container for use in the future.

### PREVENT HARM TO THE ENVIRONMENT.



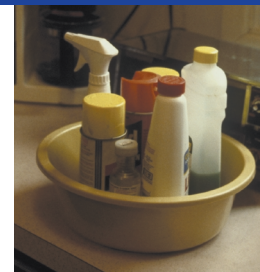
- ▶ Applying product where it could run into ponds, creeks, or other water supplies can contaminate drinking water and kill fish and birds.
- ▶ Applying product according to label directions is necessary to prevent harm to the environment.
- ▶ Never pour lawn and garden products down a drain.



## SAVE MONEY BY READING THE LABEL

### BUY THE RIGHT PRODUCT FOR THE JOB.

Read the label to make sure it's the right product for the job. Buying the right product the first time will save you money and frustration.



### BUY THE RIGHT AMOUNT FOR YOUR NEEDS.

Buy only what you need. If you buy too much for your needs, pass the product on to someone else who can use it. Some products might not be good if stored for long periods of time. The larger size might not be a good value if you can't use it all.

### USE THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF PRODUCT FOR THE JOB.

Labels indicate the correct amount to use. Using more than what's recommended is not better—it just wastes the product and the money you've spent. In some cases, using more than the recommended amount can hurt people, pets, and the environment.





## KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE— READ THE LABEL FIRST!

- ✓ Labels contain important information.
- ✓ Follow all label instructions and precautions.
- ✓ Keep products in their original containers.
- ✓ Store products out of the reach of children.
- ✓ Know where to call for help.

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For more information call:

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network  
800 858-7378



# Read the Label *First!*



PROTECT YOUR KIDS



The Consumer Labeling Initiative:  
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# Read the Label *First!*

**I**njury to a child is a parent's worst nightmare. Many common household products such as cleaners and pesticides could hurt a child if not used and stored correctly. Preventing children from being exposed to household cleaners and pesticides is your responsibility.

Always read the label first before you buy,

store, and use household cleaners and pesticide products. Keep all products out of the reach of children.



## READ THE LABEL FIRST!

## KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE

Labels tell you:

- ▶ How to use the product safely and effectively.
- ▶ How to store the product safely.
- ▶ First aid instructions.
- ▶ Phone numbers to call for help or more information.

### FOLLOW ALL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS AND PRECAUTIONS.

- ▶ Warnings and directions for use tell you how to use products safely and correctly. This helps keep you and your children safe.
- ▶ Follow warnings to open windows, wear gloves, and not breathe product dust.
- ▶ Keep children and pets away from spills and treated areas as directed.

### KEEP PRODUCTS IN THEIR ORIGINAL CONTAINERS.

- ▶ It is very dangerous to put products in food and beverage containers. Children think that something in a familiar juice or soda bottle is good to drink.
- ▶ If you throw away the original container, you throw away important information needed in case of an emergency.
- ▶ If the label tells you to mix a product in another container, use up all of the mixture. If you can't use all of it up, label the new container for future use.



### STORE PRODUCTS OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN.

- ▶ Are all your household cleaning and pesticide products stored where children can't reach them?
- ▶ Use childproof locks on low cabinets. Make certain child-resistant caps and covers are in place.
- ▶ Teach your children that household products are not toys.



### KNOW WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP.

- ▶ Many labels contain a number to call in an emergency.
- ▶ Have your local poison control center phone number handy by the phone.
- ▶ Have your doctor's phone number near the phone.
- ▶ Have the product label ready when you call. The label provides those helping you with important information about the product.



## Know Where to Call For Help.

- ▶ Many labels contain a phone number to call in an emergency.
- ▶ Have your local poison control center phone number handy by the phone.
- ▶ Have your veterinarian's phone number near the phone.
- ▶ Have the product label with you when you call! The label provides those helping you with important information about the product.

Labels contain important information.  
Follow all label instructions and precautions.  
Keep products in their original containers.  
Keep pets away from products.  
Know where to call for help.

# Read the Label First!

PROTECT YOUR PET



The Consumer Labeling Initiative:  
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# Read the Label *First!*

**T**he animals that share our lives and homes rely on us for protection. Many common household products such as cleaners and pesticides could hurt a pet if not used and stored correctly.

Always read the label first before you buy, store, and use household cleaners or pesticide products. Keep all products out of the reach of pets and children.

## Labels Tell You:

- ▶ How to use a product safely and effectively.
- ▶ How to store the product safely.
- ▶ First aid instructions.
- ▶ Phone numbers to call for help or more information.



## Follow All Label Precautions.

- ▶ Warnings and directions tell you how to use products safely and correctly. This helps keep you and your pets safe.
- ▶ Follow warnings to open windows, wear gloves, and not breathe product dust.
- ▶ Keep pets and children away from treated areas as directed on the label.

## Keep Products in Original Containers.

- ▶ It is very dangerous to put products in food and beverage containers.
- ▶ Containers without tight fitting lids can easily spill, allowing your pet access to the product.
- ▶ If you throw away the original container, you throw away important information needed in case of an emergency.
- ▶ If the label tells you to mix a product in another container, use all of the mixture. If you can't use all the mixture, label the new container for use in the future.

## Keep Pets Away from Products.

- ▶ Don't spray or store cleaning or pesticide products near pet food or water dishes.
- ▶ Make sure animals can't get at bait products while they are in use.
- ▶ In the event of a spill, be sure to keep animals out of the area until it is cleaned up.
- ▶ Don't forget about wildlife. Spraying products on a windy day can carry the product into the water supply for wild animals.
- ▶ Store all household cleaning products and pesticides where pets can't get at them.



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Visit our Web site at:

**[www.epa.gov/oppt/labeling](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/labeling)**

For more information call:

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network  
800 858-7378

## Care for Your Plants, Family, and Pets

### Read the Label FIRST!

- ✓ Labels contain important information.
- ✓ Know where to call for help.

### Follow These Tips When Selecting and Using a Garden Product:

- ✓ Identify the problem.
- ✓ Find the product that solves the problem.
- ✓ Buy the right amount for your needs.
- ✓ Pay attention to warnings.
- ✓ Use the product the right way.
- ✓ Prevent harm to the environment.



# Read the Label First!

PROTECT YOUR GARDEN



The Consumer Labeling Initiative:  
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# Read the Label *First!*

**S**ooner or later, an insect or disease could attack your houseplants, garden vegetables, lawn, shrubs, or flowers. If you use a pesticide or other garden product, you need to know that some garden products can harm plants, people, or the environment if not used correctly.

## CARE FOR YOUR PLANTS, FAMILY, AND PETS.



### Read the Label First!

Labels tell you:

- ▶ How to use a product safely and effectively.
- ▶ How to store the product safely.
- ▶ First aid instructions.
- ▶ Phone numbers to call for help or more information.

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800 858-7378

## FOLLOW THESE TIPS WHEN SELECTING AND USING A GARDEN PRODUCT.

### Identify the Problem.

Knowing the problem is the first step toward solving it.

### Find the Product that Solves the Problem.

All products do not work on every pest. Labels tell you what a product is meant to do and how it should be applied.

### Buy the Right Amount for Your Needs.

The product label tells you how much to use to treat a problem. Buy only what you need. Some products might not work as well if stored for long periods of time. A larger size might not be a good value if you can't use it.

### Use the Product the Right Way.

Product labels tell you how to safely use products for best results. Use only the amount indicated on the label. More is not better and can even harm plants and lawns. If the label tells you to mix a product in another container, use all of the mixture. If you can't use all the mixture, label the new container for use in the future.

### Pay Attention to Warnings.

Follow directions about wearing gloves or protective clothing. Understand when and how to apply the product and when it is safe for people or pets to re-enter treated areas. Note how long to wait before picking fruits and vegetables.

### Prevent Harm to the Environment.

Outdoor lawn and garden products that run into ponds, creeks, or other water supplies can contaminate drinking water and kill fish and birds. Apply products according to label directions to prevent harm to the environment. Never pour lawn and garden products down a drain. If you can't use the entire product, pass it on to someone who can.

## KNOW WHERE TO CALL FOR HELP!

- ▶ Many labels contain a phone number to call in an emergency.
- ▶ Have the phone number for your doctor and local poison control center by the phone.
- ▶ Have the product with you when you call. The label contains important information about the product.





### Background

**More than 25,000 Americans die from an unintentional drug overdose annually. These deaths were from a poisonous substance or a combination of substances that were designed to help heal or provide relief from pain, not to kill.**

The trend in poisonings has changed significantly during the past decades. While children's poisoning deaths have declined, adult poisoning deaths are greatly increasing. The poison is drugs – prescription, over-the-counter, illegal drugs, and alcohol. Drug overdoses are the second leading cause of injury-related deaths. In some states, overdose-related deaths top motor vehicle fatalities. This increase is for men and women ages 20-64.

This rise in unintentional poisonings has tremendous impact on U.S. workers and their employers in every business sector, the general public on the highway, and all Americans in their homes and communities. This affects our economy in lost wages and poor productivity, as well as healthcare costs.

The classification of drugs that is playing the biggest role in this alarming trend is opioid analgesics, or painkillers. Never before in the history of this country have so many painkillers been prescribed to so many people. And access to these potent drugs is not only coming from medical prescribers; when used for non-medical purposes, friends or relatives were the source of these drugs in more than 69% of cases.

But this trend is about Americans who did not realize the significant risks they were taking. These were preventable deaths. They may have taken more than the recommended dosage of a prescribed medication for faster results. Or, they may have unknowingly taken a lethal dose of a legal or illegal drug to get high or combined with alcohol. And to compound the issue, about three fourths of all recreational users of pain relievers are employed. This puts not only the user at risk, but their employer, their co-workers, their community, and their families. These men and women may have taken an over-the-counter medicine without realizing the potential interactions with other prescription medications.



Information about medication safety can be relayed to employees in a number of ways, including brown bag lunch presentations, safety/health fairs, and payroll stuffers. To get started, review the [Strategies for Implementing the Kit](#).





### Strategies for Implementing the Kit

**More than 25,000 Americans die from an unintentional drug overdose annually. These deaths are from a poisonous substance or a combination of substances that were designed to help heal or provide relief from pain, not to kill.**

To help mitigate these risks and ensure that workers are as safe at home as they are at work, employers can provide information to their employees about safe medication practices. This information can be relayed to employees in a number of ways and highlighted at different times. Medicine awareness should be promoted year-round; however, there are certain times when the number of unintentional medicine-related poisonings escalates.

Medication safety messages can be highlighted around:

- **Spring:** Medication consumption often rises as people battle seasonal allergies; spring is a popular time to clean out your medicine cabinet. Be sure to keep all medications secured during the cleaning process.
- **National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW):** NPPW is an opportunity during the third week of March to amplify poison prevention, specifically unintentional drug overdosing, in a nationwide effort and through local activities.
- **Fall/Winter:** This is a crucial time to emphasize medication safety as medicine consumption rises during cold and flu season.

Various poison prevention messages can be used to underscore the importance of medication safety, especially during specific times of the year. Examples of how to promote medication safety to employees are provided below. Click on the link to find more details on conducting each type of event.

#### [Brown Bag Lunch Presentations](#)

If the staff is not very large, or it is possible to have the staff attend in small groups (5 to 25 people), brown bag lunch presentations are a very effective way to provide information to employees. The presentation can be a PowerPoint slide show or it can be in an interactive quiz format. Both can stimulate discussion and fact sheets and brochures can be provided for employees to take home.

## Safety or Health Fair

If the staff is too large to accommodate the brown bag lunch type of presentation, providing the information through a fair could be effective. Many large companies already have safety or health fairs for their employees and medication safety can be a display. If the company does not have its own fair, it might be possible to partner with community safety or health fairs, or to have a display at a county or state fair. There are a number of PowerPoint presentations and quizzes that can be playing continuously to draw people to the booth; attendees can participate in the interactive quiz, test themselves with the flip chart, and receive handouts to take home to their families.

## Bring Your Child to Work Day

Many companies set aside a day when employees are invited to bring their child into work with them. Although part of the day is spent explaining what the parent does, some companies have found this a perfect opportunity to discuss safety and health issues that can affect the whole family. Medication safety would be a good topic to include in those discussions. A display can be set up in the lobby, a large office, conference room, lunch room, or classroom. Parents and children can be invited to stop by and engage in the interactive activities or watch the PowerPoint display. They can also be provided materials to take home.

## **Intranet Pages**

Many companies use Intranets (an internal version of the Internet) to keep their employees up to date on company policies, events, safety information, and other important information. The fact sheets can be uploaded to the Intranet, including [Risk Factors for Overdosing](#), [Symptoms of Overdoses](#), [Preventing Overdoses](#), and [Emergency Care for a Suspected Drug Overdose](#).

## **Payroll Stuffers**

Another way to reach all employees is through payroll envelopes. There are tri-fold brochures in this kit that give basic information about poisonings and the poison control number, 1-800-222-1222. These brochures are available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), and can be obtained by calling the number and asking for the poison educator. Many people have the misperception that the poison control centers are only for children, but every teen and adult – whether they have children or not – should be aware of the number and the service the centers provide.



### Brown Bag Lunch Presentations

- Objective:** Raise employees' awareness about the risks to themselves and their families from medications and how to reduce the chances of overdosing.
- Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes
- Setting:** Conference room, lunch room, classroom
- Equipment:** Laptop computer, LCD projector, screen or blank wall
- Preparation:** Read Background information, practice with PowerPoints, choose which materials to hand out, and read them prior to the presentation.
- Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentation: Myths & Realities](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: True or False](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: Preventing & Responding to Overdosing](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Preventing Overdoses](#)  
[Handout: Medication Worksheet](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)
- Marketing:** Place a "Coming Soon" flyer on bulletin boards or in lunch room; make an announcement on Intranet (one month in advance, and the weekly reminders); payroll stuffer announcements; employee newsletter. If the budget allows, provide lunch to increase attendance.

# Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



# Workplace

## Medication Safety

### Safety or Health Fair

- Objective:** Raise employee's awareness about the risks to themselves and their families from medications and how to reduce the chances of overdosing.
- Time Needed:** Half day to whole day
- Setting:** Cafeteria, conference room, lobby (if on-site); community center, school, library, fairgrounds or other large site open to the public (if off-site)
- Equipment:** Laptop computer
- Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, become familiar with the material in the handouts, and call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) to receive additional materials and items (magnets, stickers, etc.) to hand out.
- You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).
- Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentation: Myths & Realities](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: True or False](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: Preventing & Responding to Overdoses](#)  
[Flip Chart: True or False](#)  
[Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)  
[Handout: Medication Worksheet](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)
- Marketing:** Place a "Coming Soon" flyer on bulletin boards or in lunch room; make an announcement on Intranet (one month in advance, and the weekly reminders); payroll stuffer announcements; employee newsletter.



### Bring Your Child to Work Day

**Objective:** Raise employee's awareness about the risks to themselves and their families from medications and how to reduce the chances of overdosing.

**Time Needed:** Half day to whole day

**Setting:** Cafeteria, large classroom (if on site) or community center, school, fairgrounds (if partnering off site)

**Equipment:** Laptop computer

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, become familiar with the material in the handouts, and call the poison control center (1-800-222-1222) to receive additional materials and items (magnets, stickers, etc.) to hand out.

You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

**Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentation: Myths & Realities](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: True or False](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: Preventing & Responding to Overdoses](#)  
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[Handout: Medication Worksheet](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)

**Marketing:** Place a "Coming Soon" flyer on bulletin boards or in lunch room; make an announcement on Intranet (one month in advance, and the weekly reminders); payroll stuffer announcements; employee newsletter.



# **Myths and Realities**

# Over-the-counter medications are safer than prescription medications.

**REALITY:** All medications, even those sold without a prescription, may be harmful if not taken at the recommended dose or if taken with other substances, i.e., alcohol and certain medications.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Herbal remedies are safe because they are natural.

**REALITY:** Herbal remedies can interact with many types of medicines. They are not FDA approved for treatment of any kind. Always tell your doctor which herbal remedies you are taking.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



# Splitting pills is a safe way to save money.

**REALITY:** Not always. Some medicines are time released or coated to prevent nausea. Splitting pills could produce harmful side-effects or be ineffective. Check with your pharmacist to see which ones can and can't be split.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Children can take adult medication, just in smaller doses.**

**REALITY:** Children react differently than adults to the same medication. Always ask your child's doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about the correct dose of a medication.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**The bathroom medicine cabinet is a good place to store medications.**

**REALITY:** Medicine cabinets are never a good place to store medications because they could become affected by heat and humidity. Put medicines in a dry, cool place away from sunlight and out of the reach of children.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Medications can be safely taken with any liquid.**

**REALITY:** Liquids such as grapefruit or cranberry juice can change the effectiveness of the medication. Also check to see if alcohol should be avoided with your medications.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Buying medications on the Internet is safe.

**REALITY:** Care should be used before purchasing Internet medication. Only buy medications from pharmacy Web sites that have the VIPPS (Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites) symbol to make sure that the drugs have been approved, are not counterfeits, and meet US standards.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Sharing medication with other people for the same ailment is okay.**

**REALITY:** It's never okay to share something your doctor prescribed for you. The doctor takes many things into consideration such as age, weight, existing medical conditions and other prescriptions.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# My doctor knows which medications I am taking.

**REALITY:** Not always. Review your complete list of prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and dietary supplements with your doctor at every visit.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**People on painkillers  
cannot work demanding  
jobs or drive safely.**

**REALITY:** If taken properly,  
prescription painkillers can help people  
function normally in their everyday  
lives.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# Addiction is inevitable if you take painkillers.

**REALITY:** You should not be afraid to use painkillers prescribed to you for valid medical reasons. If you are concerned, discuss this with your doctor.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**If you don't like a medicine,  
you can stop taking it at any  
time.**

**REALITY:** Many medications can have adverse effects if stopped abruptly. Consult your doctor prior to stopping prescribed medicines.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# It's okay to combine medicines with alcohol.

**REALITY:** Many medicines can be dangerous when taken with alcohol; in some cases making it difficult to breathe and even causing death.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**If a little bit of a drug is good,  
then a lot is even better.**

**REALITY:** Sometimes a little bit of a drug can be enough, but increasing the dosage can lead to undesirable and severe effects. Directions on the container or from the physician, nurse, or other care provider should always be followed precisely.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Helpful drugs are legal,  
while harmful drugs are illegal.**

**REALITY:** Any drug has the potential to be harmful if not taken properly. Drugs with a higher potential for misuse are more strictly controlled.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**True or False?**

In some states, there are more overdosing deaths than motor vehicle deaths

**TRUE:** District of Columbia and Massachusetts in 2005.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Within a ten year span,  
medication-related poisoning  
deaths among Americans adults  
have more than doubled.

**TRUE:** This represents a greater  
number than heroin deaths in the 70's,  
cocaine deaths in the 80's, or crack  
deaths in the 90's.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



The greatest number of drug-related poisoning deaths is occurring among white men ages 35 to 44.

**True:** Men are 2.1 times more likely than women to suffer from unintentional drug poisoning.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Drug interactions only happen between prescription medications.

**False:** Drug interactions can happen with the use of over-the-counter medicines as well as vitamins and dietary supplements.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

All pharmacies will have your medical information, including allergies and other prescriptions, so it doesn't matter if you go to more than one pharmacy.

**False:** Pharmacies don't share patient information. Each company has their own database and/or network.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

With the exception of sleeping pills, it's okay to drink alcohol while taking prescription medications.

**False:** Other medications, especially painkillers, have interactions with alcohol. As with any medicine, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

More people have reported abusing prescription medications than cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants, and heroin combined.

**True:** More than 16.3 million people reported abusing prescription medications in 2006.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

The best way to dispose of medications is to flush them down the toilet.

**False:** When disposing of unused medications you should put pills in a plastic zip-lock bag that contains wet coffee grounds or cat litter.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

It is always okay to crush medicines and put them in food to make them easier to take.

**False:** Some medicines are time-released or coated to prevent stomach upset. Check with your pharmacist to see whether or not you can crush them.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

If a relative has the same ailment as you, it's okay to share medicine.

**False:** The medicine the doctor prescribed for you should not be shared with anyone else. It is prescribed for your sensitivities, weight, sex, and habits – not someone else's.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



It's okay to buy medications over the Internet because all sites are safe.

**False:** When shopping to get your prescriptions filled on the Internet look for sites that have the VIPPS (Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites) seal.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

If a medication is not relieving symptoms the first day, it's okay to take an additional dose.

**False:** Some medicines take time to start working. When prescribed a new medication, ask your doctor how long it takes to work.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

The likelihood of drug interactions increases with the number of drugs being taken.

**True:** You expose yourself to more potential interactions the more medicines you take. This includes over-the-counter as well as vitamins and dietary supplements.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

If you suspect a drug overdose and the person is breathing and responsive, the best thing to do is walk them around.

**False:** Call the poison control number, **800-222-1222.**

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# What does ICE stand for and where should we have it?

## **ICE – In Case of Emergency**

It should be in your list of stored numbers on your cell phone and is usually your closest family member.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# **Preventing and Responding to Overdoses**



## Poisoning Trends

The trend in poisonings has changed significantly during the past decades – adult (ages 20-64) poisoning deaths have greatly increased. Adult poison deaths most frequently involve drugs (prescription, over-the-counter), illegal drugs, and alcohol.

Drug overdoses are the second leading cause of injury-related deaths.

There are ways to address this increase in unintentional overdosing deaths.

**People attempting suicide need additional help.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Make a List

- Make a list of the prescription medications you are taking with dose, frequency, name of the pharmacy.
- List all over-the-counter medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements or herbal products that you take regularly.
- List your allergies to medication and food.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



## Ask Questions

- Ask your doctor for the purpose of the medication that is prescribed and how the medication should be taken.
- Check to see if there are any restrictions regarding alcohol use or other drugs.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Follow Directions

- Only take the medication as prescribed.
- Never take someone else's medication.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Check the 5 “Rights”

**These are five simple phrases to use to help prevent errors when taking or giving medicines:**

- Right Medication
- Right Person
- Right Amount
- Right Way
- Right Time

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Pay Attention

- Turn on lights before taking medication.
- Use eyeglasses, if necessary, to read the label every time you take a dose.
- Inspect all medicines before you take them to make sure it looks like what you usually take.
- Keep medications in their original containers.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Be Prepared

- Put the nationwide poison control center number – **1-800-222-1222** – beside every phone in your home and in your cell phone.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Store Properly

- Don't store medications in the bathroom medicine cabinet or in direct sunlight.
- Don't store medications with food items.
- Keep out of the sight and reach of children.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Dispose Properly

- Only purchase and keep medications that are actually needed.
- Remove and destroy all identifying personal information from prescription bottles.
- Dispose of expired or unneeded medications by spoiling them with coffee grounds or kitty litter.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Symptoms of an Overdose

- Depends on the type or combination of medications
- Medications affect people differently and may cause different reactions
- Side effects may become more pronounced and other effects of the medication may emerge
- Symptoms require immediate response, or they may lead to death

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



Drug Class	Medical Uses	Examples
Painkiller (Opioid Analgesic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of acute or chronic pain</li> <li>• Relief of coughs</li> <li>• Anti-diarrheal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codeine (Empirin®, Tylenol 1, 2, 3)</li> <li>• Hydrocodone (Vicodin®)</li> <li>• Hydromorphone (Dilaudid®)</li> <li>• Meperidine (Demerol®)</li> <li>• Methadone (Dolophine®)</li> <li>• Morphine</li> <li>• Oxycodone (OxyContin® Percodan®)</li> <li>• Propoxyphene (Darvon®)</li> </ul>
Sedative- hypnotics	<p><b>Benzodiazepines</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety and panic disorders</li> <li>• Acute stress reactions</li> </ul> <p><b>Barbiturates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insomnia</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Seizure control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alprazolam (Xanax®)</li> <li>• Chlordiazepoxide HCL (Librium®)</li> <li>• Clonazepam (Klonopin®)</li> <li>• Diazepam (Valium®)</li> <li>• Lorazepam (Ativan®)</li> <li>• Butalbital (Fiorinal®)</li> <li>• Meprobamate (Miltown®)</li> <li>• Pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal®)</li> <li>• PhenobarbitalSecobarbital (Seconal®)</li> </ul>
Stimulants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention deficit disorder and attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADD, AD/HD)</li> <li>• Narcolepsy</li> <li>• Weight loss</li> <li>• Depression (rarely)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amphetamine-dextroamphetamine (Adderall®)</li> <li>• Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine®)</li> <li>• Methylphenidate (Ritalin®)</li> <li>• Sibutramine (Meridia®)</li> </ul>

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Common side effects of painkillers and sedatives, which slow down the body's systems:

- Changes in skin – color or feel
- Changes in pupil size
- Difficulty breathing/slow breathing
- Sleepiness/drowsiness
- Confusion
- Unresponsiveness
- Nervousness, restlessness

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

## Common side effects of stimulants, which speed up the body's systems:

- Difficulty breathing/slow breathing
- Headache, dizziness
- Change in pupil size
- Vomiting
- Shaking/seizures

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

## Every Second Counts

- An unintentional overdose is a medical emergency and must be treated immediately – every second counts.
- The emergency care provided depends on whether or not the person is **responsive or nonresponsive**.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

## If a person is responsive:

- Determine what medication was taken, when it was taken, and how much was taken.
- Call the poison control center number, **(800) 222-1222**, speak with a poison specialist, and determine how to proceed.
- Keep the person calm, talk to them, and watch for any changes in their physical appearance.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## A person is unresponsive if he or she:

- Doesn't wake up when their name is loudly called
- Is having trouble breathing or is not breathing
- Can't respond to you verbally
- Appears confused
- Is having seizures

**Lay them on their side and call 911.**



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



# True or False?

Read the statements and determine if they are true or false.  
Flip the card to check your answer.

# **Good Luck!**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**Over-the-counter medications are safer  
than prescription medications.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** All medications, even those sold without a prescription, may be harmful if not taken at the recommended dose or if taken with other substances.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Herbal remedies are safe because they  
are natural.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Herbal remedies can interact with many types of medicines. They are not FDA approved for treatment of any kind. Always tell your doctor which herbal remedies you are taking.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**You should always check with your  
doctor or pharmacist before splitting any  
pill.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True:** Some medicines are time released or coated to prevent nausea. Splitting pills could produce harmful side-effects or be ineffective.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Children can take adult  
medication, just in smaller doses.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Children react differently than adults to the same medication. Always ask your child's doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about the correct dose of a medication.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**You should not store medicine in  
the bathroom medicine cabinet.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True:** Medicine cabinets are never a good place to store medications because they could become affected by heat and humidity. Put medicines in a dry, cool place away from sunlight and out of the reach of children.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Medications can be safely taken  
with any liquid.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Liquids such as grapefruit or cranberry juice can change the effectiveness of the medication. Also check to see if alcohol should be avoided with your medications.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**It is always safe to buy  
medications on the Internet.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Use care when purchasing Internet medication. Buy only from pharmacy websites that have the VIPPS (Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites) symbol to make sure that the drugs have been approved, are not counterfeits, and meet US standards.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Sharing medication with other people for the same ailment is okay.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** It's never okay to share something your doctor prescribed for you. The doctor takes many things into consideration such as age, weight, existing medical conditions and other prescriptions.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**My doctor knows which  
medications I am taking.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Not always. Review your complete list of prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and dietary supplements with your doctor at every visit.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Addiction is inevitable if you take  
painkillers.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** You should not be afraid to use painkillers prescribed for you for valid medical reasons. If you are concerned, discuss this with your doctor.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**If you don't like a medicine, you  
can stop taking it at any time.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Many medications can have adverse effects if stopped abruptly. Consult your doctor prior to stopping prescribed medications.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**You should check before  
combining medicine with alcohol.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True:** Many medicines can be dangerous when taken with alcohol; in some cases making it difficult to breathe, and even causing death.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**If a little bit of a drug is good,  
then a lot is even better.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Sometimes a little bit of a drug can be enough, but increasing the dosage can lead to undesirable and severe effects. Directions on the container or from the physician, nurse, or other care provider should always be followed precisely.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Helpful drugs are legal, while  
harmful drugs are illegal.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Any drug has the potential to be harmful if not taken properly. Drugs with a higher potential for misuse are more strictly controlled.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



## Interactive Exhibit Ideas

**DO NOT walk away from a display if you have poisons on the table!**

Many poison prevention educators have developed displays and games that they use to educate the public on various aspects of poison prevention. Call the nationwide toll-free poison prevention number – 800-222-1222 – to talk with your local poison educator about their displays and games. Many of the local poison control centers have educational materials available on their website. Go the website for the American Association of Poison Control Centers, <http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/>, and click on the “Find Local Poison Center” to find information about your local poison control center.

Below are some suggestions for activities and displays that you can make and use.

### Candy/Medicine Display

Make a display of candies and medicines that look alike by gluing them side by side on a piece of paper. Put the paper on a poster board or in a clear plastic box frame. Let children guess which ones are medicines and which ones are candies.

**Explain that in real life, they should NOT guess, but “Ask Before Tasting”!**

Some examples for the display include:

- White Tylenol caplets and white Good n’ Plenty
- Tums and Necco wafers
- Benadryl and pink Good n’ Plenty
- Red round Sudafed pills and Red Hots
- Colored gel-caps (any kind) and jelly beans
- Pastel round flat antacids and Sweetarts
- Baby aspirin and Sweetarts
- Jelly bean vitamins and jelly beans
- Gummi bear vitamins and gummi bears
- Vita-balls and gum balls
- Aspergum and cinnamon gum
- Round coated Advil and tropical M&M’s
- Brown round Tylenol and M&M’s or Skittles



Gummi bear vitamins  
and gummi bears

## Measuring the Correct Dosage

You will need to supply a variety of measuring tools (cups, spoons, droppers, etc.), small plastic containers, and colored liquid.

- Explain the following scenario to the attendees:  
Mom just got a prescription from the pharmacy for her 2½ year old child. The instructions on the bottle say give 1mL 1 time per day.
- Have the attendees select the correct measuring tool and measure the amount of medicine Mom needs to give. They should use the liquid provided as the “medicine” and pour it into the small plastic containers.
- They should choose one with mL (milliliter) marked on the tool and measure out 1 mL. A common mistake is to measure 1 tsp. which would be 5 mL of medicine instead of the needed 1 mL.)
- Many people make mistakes while measuring medicine – either giving too much medicine or not enough. Some of these mistakes can be quite serious in children as well as in adults.

<b><i>English Volume</i></b>	<b><i>Metric Volume</i></b>
1 teaspoon (t, tsp)	5 mL (cc)
1 tablespoon (T, tbsp)	15 mL (cc)
1 ounce (volume)	30 mL (cc)
1 cup (8 ounces)	240 mL (cc)
1 pint (16 ounces)	480 mL (cc)
1 quart (32 ounces)	960 mL (cc)

*Courtesy of Connecticut Poison Control Center:  
<http://poisoncontrol.uchc.edu/education/programs/healthfair.htm>*

## True or False Flipchart

Print out the questions and answers for the [True or False Flipchart](#) on cover stock (heavy paper) with each question and answer on a separate piece of paper. Laminate the sheets and punch three holes in top of the sheets. Place the sheets in a ½” or 1” three ring binder. This will hold the pages together, but allow the pages to be flipped. To get the display to stand on the table, fold the notebook inside out so the rings are facing upward. Put the first part of the Velcro dots in the two outside corners of both the front and back covers of the binders. Put the second part of the Velcro dots on both ends of two pieces of ribbons that are about 5” to 6” long. Then join the ribbons to the Velcro dots that are in the corners. This will form a tent that will allow the questions and answers to be read then flipped over.



### Risk Factors for Overdosing

Painkillers have been around for a long time. So why has there just recently been such a great increase in the number of overdoses from painkillers?

**Overdose:** the ingestion or application of a drug or other substance in quantities greater than are recommended or generally practiced.

Some of the reasons include:

- Increased use of medications in general and painkillers in particular
- Increased use of multiple medications, which increases the potential of drug interactions
- Availability of newer controlled release formulas and longer lasting medications – both prescription and over-the-counter
- Increase in consumer advertising of medications, leading to the request for medication which might not be needed and may interact dangerously with painkillers

**Most people do not take a painkiller or other drugs with the intention of overdosing.**

However, when prescription medications are used in ways other than how they were intended problems can arise. These can include overdose, toxic reactions, and serious drug interactions. This can lead to conditions such as slowed or stopped breathing, heart beating too fast or too slow, dangerously high or low blood pressure, seizures, and death.

Some of the common medication mistakes that can lead to overdosing include:

- **IMPROPER USE:** medication instructions are not followed or understood (i.e., do not crush or chew, do not mix with alcohol)
- **OVERUSE:** too much or the wrong strength of a medication is taken (i.e., taking additional doses for breakthrough pain)
- **UNDERUSE:** a prescribed medication is not taken when it should be (i.e., disruption of tolerance)
- **INTERACTIONS:** prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, dietary supplements, and vitamins are used together causing potentially dangerous combinations (i.e., doctor and/or pharmacist may not have complete list of these items) full or part time.

- **MEDICAL ERROR:** a mistake is made in the prescription process (i.e., administer the wrong drug, strength, or dose of medications; confusion over look-alike/sound-alike drugs; taken incorrectly)
- **ILLICIT USE:** taking someone else's prescription or combining medications with street drugs (i.e., may be wrong dosage; may cause allergic reaction, may interact with other medications)

Virtually any prescription drug can be consumed for reasons other than its medical purpose; however, it is usually mood-altering drugs that are the focus of abuse. Some of the more popular prescription drugs for abuse include opiate-based drugs for pain relief, tranquillizers, stimulants and amphetamines, and sedatives and barbiturates.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a handout.**





### Symptoms of Overdoses

Symptoms can vary depending on the type of medication or combination of medications taken.

Additionally, medications affect each person differently and may cause different reactions. If an overdose occurs, side effects from the medication may become more pronounced and other effects of the medication may emerge. These symptoms require immediate action, or they may lead to death.

Drug Class	Medical Uses	Examples
<b>Painkiller (Opioid Analgesic)</b>	Management of acute or chronic pain Relief of coughs Anti-diarrheal	Codeine (Empirin®, Tylenol 1, 2, 3) Hydrocodone (Vicodin®) Hydromorphone (Dilaudid®) Meperidine (Demerol®) Methadone (Dolophine®) Morphine Oxycodone (OxyContin® Percodan®) Propoxyphene (Darvon®)
<b>Sedative-hypnotics</b>	<b>Benzodiazepines</b> Anxiety and panic disorders Acute stress reactions <b>Barbiturates</b> Insomnia Anxiety Seizure control	Alprazolam (Xanax®) Chlordiazepoxide HCL (Librium®) Clonazepam (Klonopin®) Diazepam (Valium®) Lorazepam (Ativan®) Butalbital (Fiorinal®) Meprobamate (Miltown®) Pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal®) Phenobarbital Secobarbital (Seconal®)
<b>Stimulants</b>	Attention deficit disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADD, AD/HD) Narcolepsy Weight loss Depression (rarely)	Amphetamine-dextroamphetamine (Adderall®) Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine®) Methylphenidate (Ritalin®) Sibutramine (Meridia®)

If a person swallowed too much medicine, or the wrong type of medicine, call the nationwide 24-hour poison control center number, **800-222-1222**, for assistance.

Bring all bottles of medication you believe the person took to the phone with you. It is helpful to provide prescription information, dosage, and possible amount of medication taken. If a person collapses or stops breathing, call 911 or a local emergency number for immediate emergency assistance.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a handout.**



## Preventing Overdoses

**It is possible to reverse the trend of increasing overdoses. Being informed, paying attention, and following the recommendations below can greatly reduce the risk of overdosing.**

### MAKE A LIST

- Make a list of prescription medications you are taking now. Include the dose, how often you take them, and the name of the pharmacy. Take your medication list every time you go to your doctor's office and the pharmacy, especially if you see more than one doctor.
- List all over-the-counter medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements or herbal products that you take regularly.
- List your allergies to medication and food.

### ASK QUESTIONS

- Ask your doctor or dentist for the purpose of the medication that is prescribed. Have that information written on the prescription. Many drug names look alike and knowing the purpose helps you and the pharmacist double-check the prescription.
- Understand how the medication should be taken. Some medications can be harmful if crushed or chewed.
- Ask if there are some foods, liquids, or activities that should be avoided with the medication.
- Check to see if there are any restrictions regarding alcohol use when taking the medications. Be aware of potential risks when used with street drugs.

### FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

- Only take the medication as prescribed. If the medication is not relieving the symptoms, do not take additional doses – more is not necessarily better.
- Never take someone else's medication. You don't know if it will interact with your medications, the dose may be wrong for you, or you may be allergic to it.

### CHECK THE 5 RIGHTS

- Right Medication
- Right Person
- Right Amount
- Right Way
- Right Time

## **BE PREPARED**

- Put the nationwide poison control center number – 1-800-222-1222 – beside every phone in your home and in your cell phone.

## **PAY ATTENTION**

- Use caution when buying drugs over the Internet. Products bought on the Internet could be fake, sub-potent, or not approved by the FDA. They could also be counterfeit. Use only U.S. sites that are licensed by a State board of pharmacy.
- Carefully compare the appearance and packaging of the medicines bought online with the same medicine you have gotten in the past from a conventional pharmacy.
- Turn on lights before taking medication. Look at all medicines before you take them. If it doesn't look like what you usually take, ask why. It might be a generic drug, or it might be the wrong drug.
- Use eyeglasses, if necessary, to read the label every time you take a dose to make sure you have the right drug and that you are following the instructions.
- Use actual measuring spoons (tablespoon, teaspoon) to precisely measure liquid dosages.
- Keep medications in their original containers. Many pills look alike, so by keeping them in their original containers, you will know which is which and how to take them.

## **STORE PROPERLY**

- Don't store medications in the bathroom medicine cabinet or in direct sunlight. Humidity, heat and light can affect medications' potency and safety.
- Keep track of medications used and remaining.
- Keep out of the sight and reach of children.
- Don't store medications with food items.

## **DISPOSE PROPERLY**

- Reduce supply of medicines on hand to prevent mix ups, misuse and theft.
- Only purchase and keep medications that are actually needed.
- Dispose of expired or unneeded medications. Crush solid medications and mix with kitty litter or coffee grounds (or any material that absorbs the dissolved medication and makes it less appealing for pets or children to eat), then place in a sealed plastic bag. Check for approved state and local collection programs or with area hazardous waste facilities.
- Remove and destroy all identifying personal information (prescription label) from the medication container.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a [handout](#).**



## Emergency Care for a Suspected Drug Overdose

People on medications may be at risk for overdose.

- An unintentional overdose is a medical emergency and must be treated immediately – every second counts.
- The emergency care provided depends on whether or not the person is **responsive or nonresponsive**.

### If a person is responsive:

- Determine what medication was taken, when it was taken, and how much was taken.
- Call the poison control center number, **(800) 222-1222**, speak with a poison specialist, and determine how to proceed.
- Keep the person calm, talk to them, and watch for any changes in their physical appearance.

### If a person is unresponsive:

Lay them on their side and call 911. Unresponsiveness is determined if:

- You can't wake them up.
- They are having trouble breathing or not breathing.
- They are having trouble responding to you verbally.
- They appear confused.
- They are having seizures.



# Workplace Medication Safety



Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Smoker? ☐ Yes ☐ No Alcohol? ☐ Yes ☐ No Frequency \_\_\_\_\_  
 Allergies to medications: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family history of medical conditions or addictions: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible][illegible]

## QUESTIONS FOR NEW MEDICATIONS:

Why do I need this medicine and what are its expected results? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How soon will the medicine work? \_\_\_\_\_

How long will I need to take this medication? \_\_\_\_\_

How is this medication administered or delivered? Can it be cut, crushed, or  
chewed? \_\_\_\_\_

Can I take this medicine given my family history? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can I become dependent or addicted to it? If yes, what are its addictive qualities?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does it interact with alcohol, over the counter or prescribed drugs? If so, which

ones? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Will I experience any side-effects while on this medicine and will they go away?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does this medication contain anything that can cause an allergic reaction? \_\_\_\_\_

Should I avoid certain activities while taking this medicine? \_\_\_\_\_

What should I do if I miss a dose or take too much? \_\_\_\_\_

When should I seek help if symptoms persist? \_\_\_\_\_

Who can I call if I have any questions? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the brand and generic names of the medicine? \_\_\_\_\_

What does it look like and what forms does it come in? \_\_\_\_\_

How should I store this medicine? \_\_\_\_\_

# Fact Sheet

## Carbon Monoxide

**Roughly 300 people die each year from carbon monoxide poisoning.**

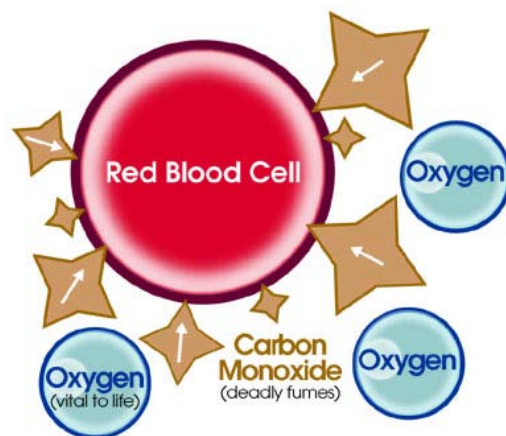
Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas. It is made when fuels burn improperly. Many fuels can produce carbon monoxide, such as:

- Wood
- Oil
- Natural gas
- Gasoline
- Kerosene
- Propane
- Coal
- Diesel

## Health Effects

It enters the body through the lungs, and is delivered to the blood. It prevents the blood from carrying and using oxygen properly, and harms the brain and other organs. Depending on the amount breathed in, CO can:

- cause loss of coordination
- worsen heart disease
- produce fatigue, headache, weakness, confusion, disorientation, nausea, and dizziness
- very high levels can cause death



The symptoms are sometimes confused with the flu or food poisoning. Fetuses, infants, elderly, and people with heart and respiratory illnesses are particularly at high risk for the adverse health effects of carbon monoxide.

## Prevention

- Install a CO detector.
- Never use portable generators indoor or near windows.
- Make sure appliances are properly adjusted and working to manufacturers' instructions and local building codes.
- Obtain annual inspections for heating system, chimneys, and flues and have them cleaned by a qualified technician.
- Open flues when fireplaces are in use.
- Use proper fuel in kerosene space heaters.
- Do not use ovens and gas ranges to heat your home.
- Do not burn charcoal inside a home, cabin, recreational vehicle, or camper.
- Make sure stoves and heaters are vented to the outside and that exhaust systems do not leak.
- Do not use unvented gas or kerosene space heaters in enclosed spaces.
- Never leave a car or lawn mower engine running in a shed or garage, or in any enclosed space.
- Make sure your furnace has an adequate intake of outside air.



## Emergency Actions

- Don't ignore your detector if it goes off
- Don't ignore symptoms, especially if more than one person is feeling them.
- Get fresh air immediately.
- Call 911 if you have symptoms.
- If you go to an emergency room, be sure to tell the physician that you suspect CO poisoning.
- Call the poison control center if your detector goes off, but you don't have symptoms.
- Have a qualified technician inspect your fuel-burning appliances and chimneys to make sure they are operating correctly.

## Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Carbon monoxide detectors are just as important as the proper use and maintenance of your fuel-burning appliances. CO detector technology is still being developed and the detectors are not generally considered to be as reliable as the smoke detectors found in homes today. You should not choose a CO detector solely on the basis of cost; do some research on the different features available.

Carbon monoxide detectors should meet Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL) standards, have a long-term warranty, and be easily self-tested and reset to ensure proper functioning. For maximum effectiveness during sleeping hours, carbon monoxide detectors should be placed close to sleeping areas. A plug in detector with battery back-up, especially sound alarms, is best. Check your batteries monthly and replace as needed.

# Fact Sheet

## Common Hazardous Household Chemicals

Many products used regularly in the home are not easily recognized as hazardous, especially since some are used on our bodies. However, if misused they can be dangerous.

Here is a list of some of the more common hazardous household chemicals.

- **Health and beauty products** (hairspray, hair remover, fingernail polish, fingernail polish remover, hair coloring products, medications, lice shampoo, etc.).
- **Automotive fluids** (oil, anti-freeze, fuel, brake fluid, windshield washer fluid, transmission fluid, car wash and polish, tar and bug remover etc.)
- **Household cleaners** (bleach, ammonia, dish soap, disinfectants, carpet and upholstery cleaner, carpet freshener, air freshener, window cleaner, furniture polish, oven cleaner, toilet bowl cleaners, mold and mildew remover).
- **Laundry products** (bleach, laundry detergent, fabric softener, etc)
- **Lawn and garden products** (fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, gasoline, oil, etc.)
- **Barbecue products** (propane, charcoal briquettes, lighter fluid, etc.)
- **Home maintenance** (paint, varnish, stains, oils, mouse/rat poison, drain cleaner)
- **Pet maintenance** (flea collar or powder, tick powder, pet shampoo)

# Fact Sheet

## Disposal of Hazardous Products

**Leftover products can poison someone; do not purchase more than is needed for the job.**

Households purchase almost 400 potentially hazardous products in a year. These products tend to be stockpiled in garages, under sinks, in cabinets, and sheds. These forgotten products can become a poison risk. Only buy enough of the product for the job needed.

Products should NEVER be discarded on the ground or poured into storm drains. Many products shouldn't even be disposed of in the trash or down the toilet. These products should be saved and taken to Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections.

Disposal instructions and reuse and recycling capabilities vary from municipality to municipality. Limiting the amount of hazardous waste materials or removing them from the solid waste stream allows municipalities to reduce the potential for unintentional exposures to sanitation workers, materials recovery facility workers, landfill workers, and the environment. For more information on disposal of hazardous products where you live, call Earth 911 at 800-CLEANUP, or visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org), and type in "hazardous waste" and your zip code to find the nearest disposal site.

General guidance for disposal:

### Products in pressurized containers

- Do not puncture or incinerate!
- **If empty:** Place in trash or offer for recycling if available.
- **If partly filled:** Call the local solid waste agency for disposal instructions.

### Products in non-pressurized containers

This includes liquids and solids (tablets, dusts, gels, pet products, etc.) in all other types of product containers (e.g., bags, boxes, bottles, cans, bait stations, squeeze tubes, etc.)

- **If empty:** Do not reuse this container. Place in trash or offer for recycling if available.



- **If partly filled:** Call your local solid waste agency for disposal instructions. Never place unused product down any indoor or outdoor drain.

# Fact Sheet

## Pesticides in the Home

**It is estimated that 8 out of 10 American households contain one or more pesticide products.**

These items are valuable for home and yard maintenance. However, most pesticides are inherently toxic. Misuse, especially when products are used in inappropriate applications or quantities, can cause illness, injury, and even death.

Unintentional poisonings can happen to anyone, at any time, in many situations. Unintentional poisonings, however, can be prevented. Following label directions for all products, including medication dosages and proper storage of potentially toxic products, are important precautions to heed.

Some products, such as medicines, are easily recognized as a potential source of poisonings, but others may not be as obvious. Many common household products are pesticides. A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. Pests include insects, mice and other animals, unwanted plants (weeds), fungi, or microorganisms like bacteria and viruses.



Some people assume that, because most households use pesticides that are available at retail outlets and can be purchased by anyone, pesticides are “safe” to use. This is not necessarily the case. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency, which regulates pesticides, does not allow pesticide product manufacturers to make safety claims.

Considering the risk inherent in misusing pesticides, it is troubling that annual surveys show that only one out of four American consumers read pesticide product labels which contain important use and emergency care information.

### **Household products that are classified as pesticides include:**

- Disinfectants, sanitizers, and air fresheners for the kitchen, laundry room, and bathroom
- Cockroach sprays and baits
- Insect repellents for personal use
- Rat and other rodent poisons
- Flea and tick sprays, powders, and pet collars
- Products that kill mold and mildew
- Some lawn and garden products, such as weed killers and fertilizers
- Some swimming pool and hot tub chemicals
- Chemicals used to treat wood used in decks and picnic tables, i.e. chromated copper arsenate (CCA) and alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ).

# Fact Sheet

## Poisonous Plants

**There are more than 700 species of poisonous plants growing in North America.**

Plants, indoors and out, can offer many benefits to body and soul. They add beauty and fragrance to our lives, they provide food, shelter, and privacy, and they have medicinal benefits. However, plants can also pose a risk when inappropriately used or accidentally eaten or touched. A plant poisoning can be an allergic reaction caused by spores or pollen, skin rashes caused by touching plants, and internal poisonings caused by eating of plants.



Some poisonous plants have become such an integral part of our lives that many of us have lost track of the fact they are potentially harmful.

A number of factors can play a role in the toxicity of plants: the part of plant; the time of year; the body weight of the person involved; the type of interaction (contact or ingested); and in some cases, the person's metabolism and susceptibility. Generally, the smaller a person is the less of the toxin is needed to cause ill effects, making children more vulnerable. Also individual's allergies play a role, i.e., some people may be seriously allergic to certain plants, such as peanuts or strawberries, while others can consume large quantities without harm.

Different species and even different individuals within a species can react quite differently. Just because a wild animal or bird ate something without becoming sick, that doesn't mean that it is not poisonous. Humans might be affected by certain plants, yet dogs or cats may be immune, for example cats and dogs can run through poison ivy without coming to harm, but people may suffer blistering and itching if they come in contact with the plant's sap (even petting their pets after they run through it).



Poisonous mushrooms are very difficult to identify. Even the experts make mistakes. Never eat mushrooms found in or on the ground. Only eat the type found in the grocery store.

To avoid poisonings from plants:

- Learn to recognize poisonous plants in your area.
- Identify all plants in the home. Have this information on hand for use in an emergency.
- Lock away or dispose of seeds, berries, bulbs and other plant materials that are known to be toxic.
- Remove known toxic plants from the house or place them out of the reach of children.
- Don't eat any part of an unknown plant.
- Don't let pets graze on poisonous plants.
- Only eat mushrooms that are purchased in the grocery store.

# Fact Sheet

## Preventing Hazardous Chemical Poisonings

Poisonings can be prevented, but if one occurs, call the nationwide toll-free number for poison centers, 1-800-222-1222, immediately.

Take the following steps to prevent poisonings.

### When buying a potentially hazardous chemical:

- Look for safer alternatives to hazardous products.
- Buy the least hazardous product.
- Buy only as much as you need to do the job at hand.
- Beware that "nontoxic" products can still contain hazardous ingredients.
- Read the entire label carefully, especially for additional health warnings.
- Buy hazardous products in child-resistant packaging.
- Avoid aerosol products because the droplets can be deeply inhaled into the lungs and quickly absorbed into the bloodstream.

### When using a potentially hazardous chemical:

- Read all labels before using hazardous products, paying careful attention to proper use instructions and dangers.
- Twice as much does not mean improved results.
- Do not mix chemicals because it can cause explosive or poisonous chemical reactions.
- If pregnant, avoid toxic chemical exposure. Many toxic products have not been tested for their effects on unborn children.
- During use, keep hazardous products out of the reach of small children. Do not leave products unattended or unsealed.
- Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when working with solvents and pesticides because they can absorb vapors from the air and hold the chemical against your eyes.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while using hazardous products. Traces of hazardous chemicals can be carried from hand to mouth. Smoking can start a fire if the product is flammable.
- Use products in well-ventilated areas to avoid inhaling fumes.
- Use protective gloves, goggles and respirators that are appropriate to the task if the product presents hazards to skin, eyes or lungs.
- Clean up after using hazardous products. Carefully seal products and properly refasten all caps.



### When storing a potentially hazardous chemical:

- Keep products out of the reach of children and animals. Store all hazardous products away from food items in locked cabinets or in cabinets with childproof latches.
- Make sure lids and caps are tightly sealed and childproof.
- Make certain all products are clearly labeled before storing them.
- Leave products in their original containers with the contents clearly identified on the labels. Never put hazardous products in food or beverage containers.
- Keep products away from sources of heat, spark, flame or ignition such as pilot lights, switches and motors. This is especially important with flammable products and aerosol cans.
- Store products containing volatile chemicals, or those that warn of vapors or fumes, in a well-ventilated area.
- Never store rags contaminated with flammable solvents because they can spontaneously start on fire. Follow the directions on the product label regarding the disposal of solvent-covered rags. If there are no directions, place the rags in an airtight, metal container and store the container outside your house away from other structures until it can be picked up with the trash.
- Store gasoline and liquid propane gas tanks only in safety-approved containers in a well-ventilated area away from all sources of heat, flame, or spark.
- Keep a working ABC-rated, or Multi-Purpose Dry Chemical, fire extinguisher in your home.
- Keep containers dry to prevent corrosion.

### Steps for cleaning up spills of potentially hazardous chemicals:

1. Remove children and pets from the area where the spill occurred.
2. Ventilate the area.
3. Do not attempt to use cleaning products to clean up the spill.
4. At a minimum, wear the appropriate protective gloves for the product. Other safety equipment may be required for volatile solvents, pesticides or corrosive products.
5. Contain the spill to a small area by soaking it up with a non-flammable absorbent material, such as clay-based kitty litter.
6. Put the contaminated material into a non-corroding container. A plastic bucket with a tight-fitting lid is recommended.
7. Seal the container and label it with the product name, approximate amount of product, absorbent material used, date, and the word DANGER or POISON.
8. Contact local solid waste authorities for information on how to dispose of the contaminated material or save for a household hazardous waste collection (call [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com) for more information).
9. After the spill has been absorbed, thoroughly rinse the area several times with water and rags. Then wash the area carefully to remove remaining traces of the product.

# Fact Sheet

## Preventing Overdoses

**It is possible to reverse the trend of increasing overdoses. Being informed, paying attention, and following the recommendations below can greatly reduce the risk of overdosing.**

### MAKE A LIST

- Make a list of prescription medications you are taking now. Include the dose, how often you take them, and the name of the pharmacy. Take your medication list every time you go to your doctor's office and the pharmacy, especially if you see more than one doctor.
- List all over-the-counter medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements or herbal products that you take regularly.
- List your allergies to medication and food.

### ASK QUESTIONS

- Ask your doctor or dentist for the purpose of the medication that is prescribed. Have that information written on the prescription. Many drug names look alike and knowing the purpose helps you and the pharmacist double-check the prescription.
- Understand how the medication should be taken. Some medications can be harmful if crushed or chewed.
- Ask if there are some foods, liquids, or activities that should be avoided with the medication.
- Check to see if there are any restrictions regarding alcohol use when taking the medications. Be aware of potential risks when used with street drugs.

### FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

- Only take the medication as prescribed. If the medication is not relieving the symptoms, do not take additional doses – more is not necessarily better.
- Never take someone else's medication. You don't know if it will interact with your medications, the dose may be wrong for you, or you may be allergic to it.

### CHECK THE 5 RIGHTS

- Right Medication
- Right Person
- Right Amount
- Right Way
- Right Time

## BE PREPARED

- Put the nationwide poison control center number – **1-800-222-1222** – beside every phone in your home and in your cell phone.

## PAY ATTENTION

- Use caution when buying drugs over the Internet. Products bought on the Internet could be fake, sub-potent, or not approved by the FDA. They could also be counterfeit. Use only U.S. sites that are licensed by a State board of pharmacy.
- Carefully compare the appearance and packaging of the medicines bought online with the same medicine you have gotten in the past from a conventional pharmacy.
- Turn on lights before taking medication. Look at all medicines before you take them. If it doesn't look like what you usually take, ask why. It might be a generic drug, or it might be the wrong drug.
- Use eyeglasses, if necessary, to read the label every time you take a dose to make sure you have the right drug and that you are following the instructions.
- Use actual measuring spoons (tablespoon, teaspoon) to precisely measure liquid dosages.
- Keep medications in their original containers. Many pills look alike, so by keeping them in their original containers, you will know which is which and how to take them.

## STORE PROPERLY

- Don't store medications in the bathroom medicine cabinet or in direct sunlight. Humidity, heat and light can affect medications' potency and safety.
- Keep track of medications used and remaining.
- Keep out of the sight and reach of children.
- Don't store medications with food items.

## DISPOSE PROPERLY

- Reduce supply of medicines on hand to prevent mix ups, misuse and theft.
- Only purchase and keep medications that are actually needed.
- Dispose of expired or unneeded medications. Crush solid medications and mix with kitty litter or coffee grounds (or any material that absorbs the dissolved medication and makes it less appealing for pets or children to eat), then place in a sealed plastic bag. Check for approved state and local collection programs or with area hazardous waste facilities.
- Remove and destroy all identifying personal information (prescription label) from the medication container.

# Fact Sheet

## Risk Factors for Overdosing

Painkillers have been around for a long time. So why has there just recently been such a great increase in the number of overdoses from painkillers?

**Overdose:** the ingestion or application of a drug or other substance in quantities greater than are recommended or generally practiced.

### Some of the reasons include:

- Increased use of medications in general and painkillers in particular
- Increased use of multiple medications, which increases the potential of drug interactions
- Availability of newer controlled release formulas and longer lasting medications – both prescription and over-the-counter
- Increase in consumer advertising of medications, leading to the request for medication which might not be needed and may interact dangerously with painkillers

### Most people do not take a painkiller or other drugs with the intention of overdosing.

However, when prescription medications are used in ways other than how they were intended problems can arise. These can include overdose, toxic reactions, and serious drug interactions. This can lead to conditions such as slowed or stopped breathing, heart beating too fast or too slow, dangerously high or low blood pressure, seizures, and death.

Some of the common medication mistakes that can lead to overdosing include:

- **IMPROPER USE:** medication instructions are not followed or understood (i.e., do not crush or chew, do not mix with alcohol)
- **OVERUSE:** too much or the wrong strength of a medication is taken (i.e., taking additional doses for breakthrough pain)
- **UNDERUSE:** a prescribed medication is not taken when it should be (i.e., disruption of tolerance)
- **INTERACTIONS:** prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, dietary supplements, and vitamins are used together causing potentially dangerous combinations (i.e., doctor and/or pharmacist may not have complete list of these items) full or part time.
- **MEDICAL ERROR:** a mistake is made in the prescription process (i.e., administer the wrong drug, strength, or dose of medications; confusion over look-alike/sound-alike drugs; taken incorrectly)

- **ILLICIT USE:** taking someone else's prescription or combining medications with street drugs (i.e., may be wrong dosage; may cause allergic reaction, may interact with other medications)

Virtually any prescription drug can be consumed for reasons other than its medical purpose; however, it is usually mood-altering drugs that are the focus of abuse. Some of the more popular prescription drugs for abuse include opiate-based drugs for pain relief, tranquillizers, stimulants and amphetamines, and sedatives and barbiturates.

# Fact Sheet

## Safer Alternatives

Before buying or using a potentially hazardous household chemical, check to see if there is a safer alternative. This could also be less expensive and better for the environment.

For this:	Try this:
Air freshener	Simmer cinnamon and cloves; leave opened box of baking soda in room; or set out a dish of vinegar.
All purpose cleaner	Dissolve 4 tablespoons baking soda in 1 quart warm water for a cleaning solution or use baking soda sprinkled on a damp sponge.
Aluminum spot remover	To remove stains and discoloration from aluminum cookware, fill cookware with hot water, add 2 tablespoons cream of tartar to each quart of water, bring solution to a boil and simmer ten minutes, and wash as usual and dry.
Ants	Sprinkle red chili powder or cream of tartar at point of entry. Boric acid will also kill ants when spread liberally around the points of entry. Boric acid has some toxicity and should not be applied to areas where small children and animals are likely to contact it.
Bleach	Substitute Borax.
Blood stains	Rinse or sponge blood stains immediately with club soda, repeat as necessary, and wash as usual.
Brass polish	Clean and polish unlacquered brass with a soft cloth dampened with Worcestershire sauce.
Car battery corrosion	Make a paste of baking soda and water, apply to corrosion, and rinse off.
Chocolate stains	Rinse or sponge chocolate stains immediately with club soda, repeat as necessary, and wash as usual.
Chrome polish	Apply apple cider vinegar and then polish with baby oil
Cleaners (general household)	Clean with a mixture of 1/2 cup ammonia, 1/3 cup vinegar, and 1/4 cup baking soda in one gallon of warm water.
Coffee stains	Rub coffee stains gently with moist salt.
Coffee pot stain	To remove stains in coffee, soak it in vinegar.
Copper cleaner	Clean copper by rubbing gently with lemon juice and salt.
Decal remover	To remove a decal, soak it in white vinegar.
Drain cleaner	Put 1/2 cup baking soda, then 1/2 cup white vinegar down your

<b>For this:</b>	<b>Try this:</b>
	drain, cover the drain, let set for a few minutes, and then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain to flush it.
<b>Fertilizer</b>	Use compost and vermin-compost instead of fertilizers.
<b>Fiberglass stain remover</b>	To remove stains from fiberglass, rub it with baking soda paste.
<b>Flea &amp; tick repellent</b>	To repel ticks and fleas, scatter pine needles, fennel, rye or rosemary on pet's bed.
<b>Floor cleaner</b>	Clean with a mixture of 1 cup vinegar mixed with 2 gallons of water.
<b>Furniture polish</b>	To polish furniture, mix 2 parts olive oil with 1 part lemon juice, apply to the furniture, and polish with a soft cloth.
<b>Garbage disposal deodorizers</b>	Grind citrus rind or ice cubes to remove odors from garbage disposal.
<b>Gold &amp; Silver polish</b>	To clean tarnish off gold and silver (not silver plate), apply toothpaste with a soft toothbrush or cloth, rinse with clean warm water, and polish dry.
<b>Grease fire</b>	To put out a grease fire, douse with baking soda.
<b>Grease removal</b>	Use Borax on damp cloth to remove grease.
<b>Hand cleaner for paint/grease</b>	To remove paint or grease from hands, rub with baby oil.
<b>Ink spot remover</b>	To remove an ink spot, put cream of tartar on the stain, squeeze a few drops of lemon juice over it, rub it in for a minute, brush off the powder, and sponge with warm water or launder.
<b>Insects on plants</b>	Apply soapy water on leaves and then rinse.
<b>Lime and mineral deposit remover</b>	<p>Hard lime deposits around faucets can be softened for easy removal by covering the deposits with vinegar-soaked rags or paper towels. Leave rags or paper towels on for about 1 hour before cleaning.</p> <p>To remove deposits that may be clogging metal shower heads, combine 1/2 cup white vinegar with 1 quart water, completely submerge the shower head and boil for 15 minutes. If you have a plastic shower head, combine 1 pint white vinegar with 1 pint hot water, completely submerge the shower head, and soak for about 1 hour.</p>
<b>Mildew remover</b>	Clean mildew with a mixture of equal parts of vinegar and salt.
<b>Mosquito repellent</b>	Burn citronella candles to keep mosquitoes away.
<b>Moth repellent</b>	Use cedar chips or dried lavender enclosed in cotton sachets in closets or storage trunks to keep moths out.

<b>For this:</b>	<b>Try this:</b>
<b>Nematode (parasitic worm) repellent</b>	Plant marigolds in garden to repel nematodes.
<b>Oil stain remover</b>	To remove oil stains, rub white chalk into stain before laundering.
<b>Oven cleaner</b>	Clean ovens with mixture of 2 tablespoons liquid soap, 2 teaspoons borax, and warm water
<b>Paint brush softener</b>	Soften paint brushes by soaking them in hot vinegar.
<b>Perspiration spot remover</b>	Remove perspiration spots by rubbing with baking soda.
<b>Refrigerator deodorizer</b>	An open box of baking soda will get rid of odors in the refrigerator.
<b>Roach repellent</b>	Sprinkle entry points with chopped bay leaves and cucumber skins. Boric acid will also kill ants when spread liberally around the points of entry. Boric acid has some toxicity and should not be applied to areas where small children and animals are likely to contact it.
<b>Rust removal (clothing)</b>	Rub rust spot with a mixture of lemon juice and salt and then place in sunlight.
<b>Rust removal (bolt/nut)</b>	Soak bolts or nuts in carbonated beverage to remove rust.
<b>Slug and snail repellent</b>	Plant onions and marigolds in garden to repel slugs and snails.
<b>Stainless steel polish</b>	Polish stainless steel by rubbing with mineral oil.
<b>Toilet bowl cleaner</b>	Clean toilet bowl by rubbing with a paste of borax and lemon juice.
<b>Tub and tile cleaner</b>	Clean tub and tile by rubbing with a mixture of 1/4 cup baking soda, 1/2 cup white vinegar, and warm water
<b>Upholstery spot removal</b>	Remove spots on upholstery by rubbing with club soda.
<b>Wine stain removal</b>	Remove wine stains by rubbing with salt.
<b>Window cleaner</b>	Clean windows with a mixture of 1/2 cup of vinegar in 1 gallon of warm water.
<b>Wood polish</b>	Polish interior unvarnished wood by rubbing with a mixture of 3 parts olive oil and 1 part white vinegar.



# Fact Sheet

## Symptoms of Overdoses

Symptoms can vary depending on the type of medication or combination of medications taken.

Additionally, medications affect each person differently and may cause different reactions. If an overdose occurs, side effects from the medication may become more pronounced and other effects of the medication may emerge. These symptoms require immediate action, or they may lead to death.

Drug Class	Medical Uses	Examples
<b>Painkiller (Opioid Analgesic)</b>	Management of acute or chronic pain Relief of coughs Anti-diarrheal	Codeine (Empirin®, Tylenol 1, 2, 3) Hydrocodone (Vicodin®) Hydromorphone (Dilaudid®) Meperidine (Demerol®) Methadone (Dolophine®) Morphine Oxycodone (OxyContin® Percodan®) Propoxyphene (Darvon®)
<b>Sedative-hypnotics</b>	<b>Benzodiazepines</b> Anxiety and panic disorders Acute stress reactions <b>Barbiturates</b> Insomnia Anxiety Seizure control	Alprazolam (Xanax®) Chlordiazepoxide HCL (Librium®) Clonazepam (Klonopin®) Diazepam (Valium®) Lorazepam (Ativan®) Butalbital (Fiorinal®) Meprobamate (Miltown®) Pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal®) PhenobarbitalSecobarbital (Seconal®)
<b>Stimulants</b>	Attention deficit disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADD, AD/HD) Narcolepsy Weight loss Depression (rarely)	Amphetamine-dextroamphetamine (Adderall®) Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine®) Methylphenidate (Ritalin®) Sibutramine (Meridia®)

If a person swallowed too much medicine, or the wrong type of medicine, call the nationwide 24-hour poison control center number, **800-222-1222**, for assistance. Bring all bottles of medication you believe the person took to the phone with you. It is helpful to provide prescription information, dosage, and possible amount of medication taken. If a person collapses or stops breathing, call 911 or a local emergency number for immediate emergency assistance.

# Fact Sheet

## Types of Poisons in the Home

**As consumers, we buy more than a quarter of a million different potentially hazardous household products.**

These materials used in and around the home for medication, cleaning, cosmetic purposes, and killing insects and weeds.

### Medications

Medicine can help us to get well when we are sick. However, medicine needs to be taken by the right person, in the right amount, and in the right way. Ingesting the wrong medicine or too much medicine could make you really sick, it could even cause death. Many households have over-the-counter medicines like vitamins, herbals, pain relievers, and creams. Prescription drugs should be taken under a physician's guidance. All medicines come with directions. Read and follow the directions that say how much to take, when to take it, and things to avoid (like driving, certain foods, other medications, etc).



### Cleaning Products

Cleaning products make cleaning the house easier. They often smell good and have attractive packaging. However, these products are poisonous if inhaled, ingested, or splashed on the skin or in the eyes. Some products can make deadly combinations when used together. For example, mixing chlorine and ammonia makes a deadly gas. Always keep household cleaners in their original containers. Containers should be clearly labeled. Read all directions and warnings BEFORE using a product. Never store leftover cleaning products in food containers like a used water bottle or a plastic container.



### Health & Beauty Products

Health and beauty products are designed to make us look better, smell better and feel better, but they too can be poisonous. Cosmetics and other personal care items range in toxicity. Some have little to no effect on the body like lipstick while others are a clear danger like perfumes. Perfumes, aftershaves, colognes and mouthwash all contain alcohol. Alcohol is not meant to be ingested by children. It can cause serious illness and even death. These products should be kept out of the reach of children.



## Outdoor Items

Plants are pretty. They come in a wide variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. Children are especially attracted to plants that smell good, look colorful, have berries, and are within easy reach. While most plants are harmless to humans, poisonous plants are commonly found in our homes, gardens, and public areas. Plants poison people in two ways – contact with the skin and contact with the mouth including swallowing. Reactions range from mild skin irritation to much more serious effects. It is common that one part of a plant is poisonous while other parts are not. Poisonous mushrooms are very difficult to identify. Even the experts make mistakes. Never eat mushrooms found in or on the ground. Only eat the type found in the grocery store.



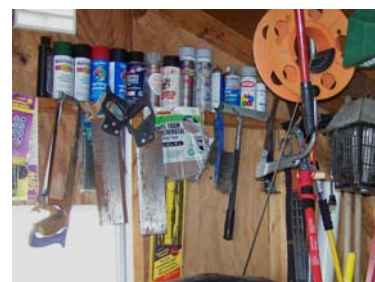
## Pesticides

Many people use bug killers, weed killers, lawn fertilizers, and other pesticides and insecticides to keep their trees, shrubs and lawns healthy and insect-free. These products are poisonous and can be particularly dangerous. Read the directions on the label carefully BEFORE using the product and follow safety instructions, every time you use the product. Wear protective clothing such as gloves, goggles, masks, and long sleeves/pants. Wash hands after contact with pesticides. Do not apply pesticides on a windy day. Keep all fertilizers and pesticides in their original containers under lock and key. Be careful not to spray children's toys, play gyms, sandboxes, bikes, or pet food dishes when applying pesticides.



## Garage Items

Fluids for the car, home improvement products, and chemicals help to keep our homes and cars looking and running well. However, dangerous poisons can be found in the garage or other storage areas like sheds, basements, and closets. These products can be harmful and even fatal if swallowed, inhaled, or splashed on the skin or in the eye. For example, windshield washer fluid can cause blindness and possible death in small amounts. When inhaled, many of these products can have toxic effects on the body. Store automotive and household products in a locked area. Keep chemicals in their original containers and read directions BEFORE using the product. Never keep leftover chemicals in water bottles, coffee cans, and other food containers. Follow the safety precautions on the container. on the container.



# Fact Sheet

## Understanding the Terms

It is important to read a chemical product's label, understanding its proper use and proper storage.

The label of a product will indicate the level of toxicity and precautions that should be taken when used. All the terms do not have the same meaning.

**CAUTION** indicates the lowest level of potential harm. It means that the product is not likely to produce permanent damage as a result of exposure, if appropriate first aid is given. The eye or skin could become inflamed, or adverse effects, such as dizziness or stomach upset, could occur if the product is swallowed or inhaled.

**WARNING** indicates a higher level of potential harm than CAUTION, meaning that you could become seriously ill or harmed. It also is used to identify products that can easily catch on fire. These products are required by law to be in child-resistant packaging.

**DANGER** indicates the highest level of potential harm. Unintentional exposure of the eye or skin of the product could produce tissue damage. Swallowing the product could produce damage to the mouth, throat, and stomach or even death. This word is also used if the material could explode if exposed to an open flame. These products are required by law to be in child-resistant packaging. You may also find a skull-and-crossbones symbol along with words "DANGER-POISON" on certain pesticide products. This means the product can harm the whole body.

**POISON** indicates that it can injure or kill if absorbed through the skin, ingested or inhaled.

**TOXIC** means it can cause injury or death if swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin.

**IRRITANT** indicates it causes soreness or swelling of skin, eyes, mucous membranes, or respiratory system.

**FLAMMABLE** means it easily catches on fire and tends to burn rapidly.

**FLAMMABLE LIQUID** means it catches on fire below 140°F (100°F for US DOT purposes).



**COMBUSTIBLE LIQUID** indicates it has catches on fire from 140°F (100°F for US DOT purposes) to 200°F.

**CORROSIVE** indicates a chemical or its vapors that can cause a material or living tissue to be destroyed.

# National Poison Prevention Week

**Poison  
Prevention  
Week Council**



National Poison Prevention Week was established by Congress to alert the American people to the problem of unintentional poisonings. Shortly after its founding in 1961, the [Poison Prevention Week Council](#) was formed to coordinate the annual event and promote poison prevention. Numerous presidents of

the United States have signed a proclamation designating the third week of March as National Poison Prevention Week.

## Third Week of March

Congress designated the third week of March as the annual, nationally recognized week to highlight the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them. However, people can and do prevent poisonings every day. More than 90 percent of poisonings occur in the home, and the majority of non-fatal poisonings occur in children younger than six. This makes March an opportune time to draw attention to poison awareness, as families prepare for spring cleaning and summer break, when kids will be out of school.

## Celebrating Poison Prevention Week

More than 2 million poisonings are reported annually to the 61 poison control centers across the country. Each year, poison control centers and concerned citizens have celebrated National Poison Prevention Week to raise awareness of unintentional poisonings. Following are examples of the types of activities local poison control centers host:

- Holding poster, bookmark, coloring and brochure contests (see instructions for entering the National Poison Prevention Week [poster contest](#))
- Distributing materials
- Hosting health fairs
- Creating poison seminars
- Securing proclamations from local and state government officials
- Putting on puppet shows to educate children about poison prevention
- Holding train-the-trainer seminars (e.g., to educate nurses, teachers, caregivers)
- Building children's poison safaris at the local zoo

## How to Participate

Everyone – a poison control center educator, a nurse, a librarian, a teacher, a parent, a caretaker or a concerned citizen – can get involved to help ensure the safety of children and adults in their home, at work and in their community. To help plan a poison prevention event during the third week of March, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Poison Control Program, has a National Poison Prevention Week Event Planner available at [www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov).

## Resources

Promoting poison prevention is simple and free. For additional materials and outreach ideas, contact your local poison control center. Centers can be found by calling the nationwide toll-free number, 1-800-222-1222, or visiting <http://www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov>. Additional National Poison Prevention Week information is available at <http://www.poisonprevention.org>.



## Other Sources of Information

**American Academy of Pediatrics** and its member pediatricians dedicate their efforts and resources to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. The AAP has approximately 55,000 members in the United States, Canada and Latin America. <http://www.aap.org>.

**American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC)** is a nationwide organization of poison centers and interested individuals. Local chapters may be able to provide you with materials for outreach efforts. <http://www.aapcc.org>.

**The American Council for Drug Education** is a substance abuse prevention and education agency that develops programs and materials based on the most current scientific research on drug use and its impact on society. <http://www.acde.org/>.

**The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials** is the national nonprofit organization representing the state and territorial public health agencies of the United States, the U.S. Territories, and the District of Columbia. Its members, the chief health officials of these jurisdictions, work for sound public health policy and state-based public health practice. <http://www.astho.org>.

**Asthma Regional Council (ARC)** works to reduce the impact of asthma across New England, through collaborations of health, housing, education, and environmental organizations with particular focus on the contribution of schools, homes, and communities to the disease and with attention to its disproportionate impact on populations at greatest risk. <http://www.asthmaregionalcouncil.org/>.

**The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's** Lead Poisoning Prevention Program in conjunction with the Office of Refugee Resettlement developed the Lead Poisoning Prevention in Newly Arrived Refugee Children tool kit in response to the increasing number of refugee children entering in the United States and subsequently developing elevated blood lead levels. [http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/Publications/RefugeeToolKit/Refugee Tool Kit.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/Publications/RefugeeToolKit/Refugee_Tool_Kit.htm).

**Checnet's** Interactive Virtual House is filled with familiar, everyday household items - furniture, cleaners, art supplies, toys, bug sprays and other pesticides, carpets, personal care products and food --that you may have in your home. Within each room are articles with potential risks to a child's health and the likely chemical ingredients associated with each product. By following a chemical link, you'll find detailed information about its health hazards and how children may come into contact with it. We suggest ways to detect the chemical in your home, how to get rid of it, and safer alternatives along with plenty of links to other helpful organizations and articles. <http://www.checnet.org/healthhouse/virtualhouse/index.asp>.



**Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that works to strengthen the capacity of community coalitions in their effort to create and maintain safe, healthy and drug-free communities. CADCA supports its members with training and technical assistance, public policy advocacy, media strategies and marketing programs, conferences and special events. <http://www.cadca.org/>.

**Housing and Urban Development's** Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control was established to eliminate lead-based paint hazards in America's privately-owned and low-income housing. The OHHLHC provides funds to state and local governments to develop cost-effective ways to reduce lead-based paint hazards. In addition, the office enforces HUD's lead-based paint regulations, provides public outreach and technical assistance, and conducts technical studies to help protect children and their families from health and safety hazards in the home. <http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/>.

**The Health Resources and Services Administration**, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the primary Federal agency for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated or medically vulnerable. Comprising six bureaus and 12 offices, HRSA provides leadership and financial support to health care providers in every state and U.S. territory. <http://www.hrsa.gov/poisoncontrol/default.htm>.

**Internet Public Library** site has children's activities and is a project of the University of Michigan chapter of the American Pharmaceutical Association Academy of Students of Pharmacy, College of Pharmacy, School of Education, and Internet Public Library. <http://www.ipl.org/youth/poisonsafe/>.

**IPM Institute of North America, Inc.** is a non-profit organization formed in 1998 to accelerate adoption of integrated pest management in agriculture and communities by using the power of the marketplace. It is funded by grants from government, private foundations and industry, memberships and fees for services and programs. <http://www.ipminstitute.org/>.

**Meth-Free Mesa County** has a website with extensive information on methamphetamine. Their task force is divided into five committees: prevention, treatment, enforcement, drug-endangered children, public relations, and safety. <http://methfree.mesacounty.us/Methamphetamine.aspx>.

**Montana Meth Project** is a large-scale exercise in prevention, aimed at significantly reducing Meth use in Montana. Their website has information on an ongoing, research-based marketing campaign – supported by community outreach and public policy initiatives – that realistically and graphically communicate the risks of methamphetamine to the youth of Montana. There are downloadable audio, video, and print PSAs. <http://www.montanameth.org/>.

**National Center for Healthy Housing** plays an important role in reducing children's risk of lead poisoning and has expanded its mission to help to decrease children's exposure to other hazards in the home including biological, physical, and chemical contaminants in and around the home. It sponsors research on methods to reduce residential environmental hazards and to scientifically assess risks. <http://www.centerforhealthyhousing.org/>.

**National Inhalant Prevention Coalition** is a public-private effort to promote awareness and recognition of the problem of inhalant use. It serves as an inhalant referral and information clearinghouse, stimulates media coverage about inhalant issues, develops informational materials, produces *ViewPoint* (a quarterly newsletter), provides training and technical assistance and leads a week-long national grassroots inhalant education and awareness campaign. <http://www.inhalants.org/>.

**National Institute of Medicine, National Library of Medicine's ToxTown** uses color, graphics, sounds and animation to provide information on everyday locations where you might find toxic chemicals, non-technical descriptions of the chemicals links to additional information, explains how the environment can impact human health and the connections between chemicals, the environment, and the public's health. <http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/>. NIM's site also has a searchable database of household products by brand name. It provides manufacturer information, ingredients, health effects, handling and disposal, and more. <http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/>.

**National Institute on Drug Abuse's** mission is to bring the power of science to bear on drug abuse and addiction. This charge has two critical components. The first is the strategic support and conduct of research across a broad range of disciplines. The second is ensuring the rapid and effective dissemination and use of the results of that research to significantly improve prevention, treatment and policy as it relates to drug abuse and addiction. <http://www.nida.nih.gov/>

**National Pesticide Information Center**, a cooperative effort of Oregon State University and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has information on more than 600 pesticide active ingredients incorporated into more than 50,000 different products registered for use in the United States since 1947. NPIC is a toll-free information service, (800) 858-7378, operated 7 days per week from 6:30 am to 4:30 Pacific Time. <http://npic.orst.edu/>.

**The National Pest Management Association**, a non-profit organization with more than 5,000 members, was established in 1933 to support the pest management industry's commitment to the protection of public health, food and property, reflected both in continuing education of pest management professionals and the dissemination of timely information to homeowners and businesses. <http://www.pestworld.org/>.

**National Poison Prevention Week Council** provides information about events associated with National Poison Prevention Week and steps to help prevent accidental poisonings. Phone: (301) 504-7908, Fax: (301) 504-0862, <http://www.poisonprevention.org/>.

**The National Safety Council** is a nonprofit, nongovernmental, public service organization dedicated to protecting life and promoting health. The NSC is a membership organization, founded in 1913 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1953. Members include more than 48,000 businesses, labor organizations, schools, public agencies, private groups and individuals. <http://www.nsc.org/issues/poison/>.

**The New York City Department of Health** provides a wide range of information on community health including pest control, illegal pesticides. <http://home2.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/community/community.shtml>.

**Partnership for a Drug-Free America** is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to reduce illicit drug use in America. It helps parents and caregivers effectively address drug and alcohol abuse with their children. A major new initiative will include a web-based interactive information resource center, parent-to-parent support network, a national toll-free call center and user-friendly online/offline tools. <http://www.drugfree.org/>.

**Safe Kids Worldwide** is an international nonprofit organization dedicated solely to preventing unintentional childhood injury. It focuses on one specific problem: more children 1 to 14 die from accidents such as motor vehicle crashes, fires, drowning, poisoning and falls than any other cause. <http://www.safekids.org/>.

**Soap and Detergent Association** is a public service organization dedicated to higher standards of cleanliness in community and personal life. The industry is built on a solid history of producing safe and effective products that are used by millions of consumers everyday. Founded in 1926, DSA is a non-profit trade association that represents manufacturers of household, industrial, and institutional cleaning products; their ingredients; and finished packaging. <http://www.cleaning101.com/>.

**Thurston County Methamphetamine Coalition** provides information and links regarding the impact of meth on human lives and the criminal justice system and where to go for treatment. There is also information on the effect of the drug on long-term users. [http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/meth/meth\\_home.htm](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/meth/meth_home.htm).

**U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission** site has a variety of poison prevention publications available in both Web format and pdf format. [http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/pois\\_prv.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/pois_prv.html).

**U.S. Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Service** provides leadership in a partnership effort to help America's private land owners and managers conserve their soil, water, and other natural resources. It provides technical assistance based on sound science and suited to a customer's specific needs. <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics**, has information on protecting children from pesticides at <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/kidpesticide.htm>. They also have an interactive Web site to teach about chemicals in household products at <http://www.epa.gov/kidshometour/>. EPA's Environmental Kid's Club includes links to chemicals around your house at <http://www.epa.gov/kids/atozindex.htm>.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 Pesticide Program** initiatives include pesticide effects on human and ecological health; exposure to priority chemicals; promoting IPM; and stopping illegal sales/distribution of unregistered pesticides; prevent the diversion of agricultural pesticides illegally into urban arenas; and more. <http://www.epa.gov/region5/pesticides/>.

**World Health Organizations/Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety** provides a forum for discussing issues in the area of sound management of chemicals for governments, inter-governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. <http://www.who.int/ifcs/documents/forums/forum4/children/en/index.html>



## Quick Facts and Figures: Poison Control & Medication Safety

**Poison Control Centers help people of all ages  
when they take too much or the wrong medicine.**

### Local Poison Center Services

- Poison centers are staffed by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists. Everyone answering calls is trained in poisoning and most are certified specialists in poison information.
- Poison centers are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-222-1222. **Calls are free and callers' information is kept strictly confidential.**
- Poison center experts provide immediate advice. Most of the time, the caller can take care of the poison exposure problem with phone contact only. If hands-on medical treatment is necessary the poison center expert will call an ambulance, stay on the line until the ambulance arrives and give treatment advice to the emergency care providers.
- Poison centers answer non-emergency calls, too. This includes calls for poison prevention information. People can also call to find out about drug interactions, whether a plant is poisonous, or how to use a pesticide safely, among other things.
- Poison center experts serve as a vital resource to their local health care communities. Emergency room doctors and nurses call the poison center when they have a question about treatment or prevention.
- Poison centers serve the hearing impaired and non-English speaking populations.
- Local poison centers collect vital information everyday that is used to help safeguard public health. Information from poison control centers is used to promote product reformulation, repackaging, recalls, bans and regulatory action; and to monitor new drugs and products in the marketplace.

### United States Poison Centers

- The entire U.S. population is served by local poison centers.
- 61 local poison centers are in operation in the United States.
- 6,563 poison consultation calls are handled on average every day by local poison centers.

## Presentation Evaluation

Title of Session: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Was the information in this presentation helpful to you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Was the right amount of time allowed for the presentation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please explain. \_\_\_\_\_

Did the presenter demonstrate knowledge of the topic? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did the presenter encourage feedback and participation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Were the audio/visual use and equipment satisfactory? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Were the handouts/materials appropriate and useful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Overall did the presentation meet your expectations? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Will you make changes as a result of this presentation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain what changes will you make? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What part of the presentation was of most interest to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What part of the presentation was of least interest to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What topics would you like to have more information on? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Evaluations

It is important to know the effectiveness of your programs. This allows you to make adjustments to the types of presentation, the materials that are distributed, the audiences that you are addressing, and other key factors of your outreach program.

One way to evaluate the knowledge gained by the participants of your program, whether it is a brown bag lunch, a presentation to a local civic organization, or a presentation to school staff, is to give a pre- and post-test. A set of basic written questions is answered by your audience prior to the presentation and collected before you start. The same set of written questions is given to your audience after your presentation. By comparing the two sets, you will be able to determine whether or not your audience understood the messages that you were trying to deliver.

If you have ability to follow up with your audience, the same set of questions can be given to them three to six months later to see if they retained the messages. At the same time, you can ask questions to see if your presentation resulted in any behavioral changes, i.e., do they now have a locked storage area for their household chemicals; have they been using the medication handout when they go to the doctor's office.

The following pages have sample pre- and post-test questions that can be used for each of the sections in the kit: Poison Prevention 101; Hazardous Chemicals Safety; and Medication Safety. If necessary, these questions can be modified to more closely align with the presentations you give.

## Pre- and Post-Test Questions for Poison Prevention 101

1. What is the nationwide poison control center phone number? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name five ways you can get poisons in or on your body.
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
  4. \_\_\_\_\_
  5. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do poisoning exposures most frequently involve children or adults? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do poisoning deaths most frequently involve children or adults? \_\_\_\_\_
5. On a label there can be three words, DANGER, CAUTION, and WARNING, indicating potential risk. List them from least to most hazardous.
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
6. If you only have a small amount of a hazardous chemical left, is it better to leave it in the big bottle or should you put it in a smaller container? \_\_\_\_\_
7. It is okay to mix household cleaners together to make a stronger cleaner solution.  
☐ True      ☐ False
8. You should not take someone else's prescription medicine even if you have the same symptoms.      ☐ True      ☐ False
9. Medicines should be stored in the bathroom medicine cabinet.  
☐ True      ☐ False
10. If a person is really drunk and doesn't respond to you, the best course of action is to just let him/her sleep it off.      ☐ True      ☐ False



### Pre- and Post-Test Questions for Hazardous Chemicals Safety

1. What is the nationwide poison control center phone number? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Most poisoning deaths occur when small children get into household cleaners.  
☐ True ☐ False
3. On a label there can be three words, CAUTION, WARNING, and DANGER, indicating potential risk. List them from least to most hazardous.  
1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. If you only have a small amount of a hazardous chemical left, is it better to leave it in the big bottle or should you put it in a smaller container? \_\_\_\_\_
5. It is okay to mix household cleaners together to make a stronger cleaner solution.  
☐ True ☐ False
6. What is the best way to dispose of hazardous household chemicals? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. It is possible to purchase illegal pesticides in the U.S. ☐ True ☐ False
8. What type of professions staff the poison control centers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. List some items found in a bedroom that could be poisonous. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. List some items laundry products that could be poisonous. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Pre- and Post-Test Questions for Medication Safety

1. What is the nationwide poison control center phone number? \_\_\_\_\_
2. It is okay to take someone else's prescription medicine if you have the same symptoms.    ☐ True        ☐ False
3. It is okay to split pills to make them easier to take or to save money.  
☐ True        ☐ False
4. It makes a difference what type of liquid you drink when you are taking your medications.    ☐ True        ☐ False
5. Do you think it is safe for people to work when they are taking painkillers? \_\_\_\_\_
6. It is okay to "jump start" your medication if it isn't working fast enough by taking a double dose in the beginning.    ☐ True        ☐ False
7. What is the best way to dispose of unused or expired medications? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What are some of the symptoms you would see if someone were overdosing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. If a person is really drunk and doesn't respond to you, the best course of action is to just let him/her sleep it off.    ☐ True        ☐ False
10. If you suspect someone is overdosing and they are responsive, what should you do?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key

### Pre- and Post-Test Questions for Poison Prevention 101

1. What is the nationwide poison control center phone number? **1-800-222-1222**
2. Name five ways you can get poisons in or on your body.
  1. **By eating or drinking**
  2. **By breathing in**
  3. **On your skin**
  4. **In your eyes**
  5. **Bite or sting**
3. Do poisoning exposures most frequently involve children or adults? **Children**
4. Do poisoning deaths most frequently involve children or adults? **Adults**
5. On a label there can be three words, DANGER, CAUTION, and WARNING, indicating potential risk. List them from least to most hazardous.
  1. **CAUTION**
  2. **WARNING**
  3. **DANGER**
6. If you only have a small amount of a hazardous chemical left, is it better to leave it in the big bottle or should you put it in a smaller container? **Leave it in big bottle**
7. It is okay to mix household cleaners together to make a stronger cleaner solution.  
☐ True ☒ **False**
8. You should not take someone else's prescription medicine even if you have the same symptoms. ☒ **True** ☐ False
9. Medicines should be stored in the bathroom medicine cabinet.  
☐ True ☒ **False**
10. If a person is really drunk and doesn't respond to you, the best course of action is to just let him/her sleep it off. ☐ True ☒ **False**

## Pre- and Post-Test Questions for Hazardous Chemicals Safety

1. What is the nationwide poison control center phone number? **1-800-222-1222**
2. Most poisoning deaths occur when small children get into household cleaners.  
☐ True ☒ **False**
3. On a label there can be three words, DANGER, CAUTION, and WARNING, indicating potential risk. List them from least to most hazardous.  
1. **CAUTION**      2. **WARNING**      3. **DANGER**
4. If you only have a small amount of a hazardous chemical left, is it better to leave it in the big bottle or should you put it in a smaller container? **Leave it in big bottle**
5. It is okay to mix household cleaners together to make a stronger cleaner solution.  
☐ True ☒ **False**
6. What is the best way to dispose of hazardous household chemicals? **Never discard on the ground, pour into storm drains or down the toilet; take them to Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections.**
7. It is possible to purchase illegal pesticides in the U.S. ☒ **True** ☐ False
8. What type of professions staff the poison control centers? **Nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists**
9. List some items found in a bedroom that could be poisonous. **Mothballs, cosmetics, hair sprays, perfumes, colognes, deodorants, nail polish and remover, medicines, carbon monoxide**
10. List some items laundry products that could be poisonous. **Laundry detergent, bleach, fabric softener, stain removers, dye**

### Pre- and Post-Test Questions for Medication Safety

1. What is the nationwide poison control center phone number? **1-800-222-1222**
2. You should not take someone else's prescription medicine even if you have the same symptoms. ☒ **True** ☐ False
3. It is okay to split pills to make them easier to take or to save money.  
☐ True ☒ **False**
4. It makes a difference what type of liquid you drink when you are taking your medications. ☒ **True** ☐ False
5. Do you think it is safe for people to work when they are taking painkillers? **Yes, provided they are taking it consistent with doctor's instructions**
6. It is okay to "jump start" your medication if it isn't working fast enough by taking a double dose in the beginning. ☐ True ☒ **False**
7. What is the best way to dispose of expired or unused medicines? **Remove from bottle and mix with kitty litter or coffee grounds, put in plastic baggies and put in trash. Mark out all personal information before putting bottle in trash.**
8. What are some of the symptoms you would see if someone were overdosing? **Changes in skin – color or feel; changes in pupil size; difficulty breathing/slow breathing; sleepiness/drowsiness; confusion; unresponsiveness; nervousness, restlessness; headache, dizziness; vomiting; shaking/seizures**
9. If a person is really drunk and doesn't respond to you, the best course of action is to just let him/her sleep it off. ☐ True ☒ **False**
10. If you suspect someone is overdosing and they are responsive, what should you do? **If the person is responsive, determine what medication was taken, when it was taken, and how much was taken; call the poison control center number; and determine how to proceed. If the person is unresponsive, lay them on their side and call 911.**



### **Ninety percent of the potential poisoning exposures happen in the home.**

There has been a change in the demographics of poisoning deaths. Although children are still at risk, it is no longer only small children getting under the kitchen sink. Now children ages 6 through 18 are 13 percent of the exposure and 3 percent of the deaths. There is a rise in unintentional poisoning by adults older than 19 years of age. They comprise 16 percent of the exposures and 97 percent of the deaths. Adults older than 60 years of age represented 16 percent of poisoning fatalities reported to poison control centers.

A number of factors have contributed to this increase in lives saved:

- the 1961 Proclamation by President Kennedy making the third week of March National Poison Prevention Week
- the formation of the National Poison Prevention Week Council
- increased awareness of the American Association of Poison Control Centers
- the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970.

All of these efforts and others contributed to a greater awareness and abatement of the risks of poisoning for small children. However, millions of people are still unintentionally poisoned every year.

To help reduce these poisonings, this kit provides the tools to conduct outreach in the community, highlighting three topics: [Poison Prevention 101](#); [Hazardous Chemicals Safety](#); and [Medication Safety](#).

For each of these topics, the kit provides:

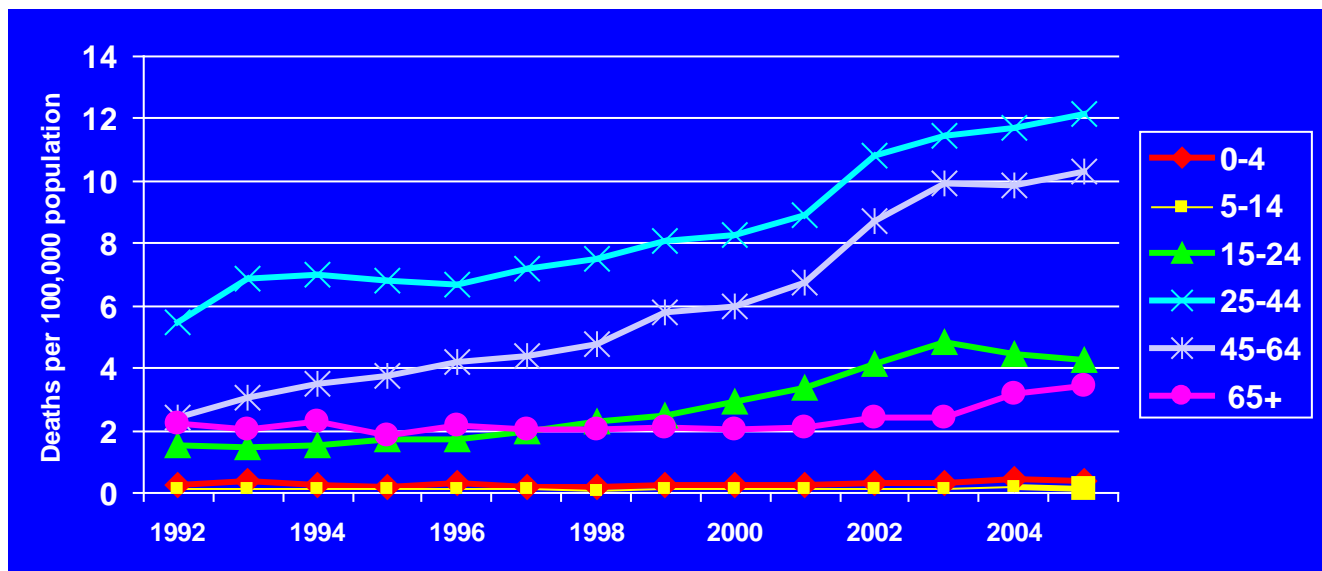
- Background information
- Strategies for implementing the kit
- Information on conducting an event
- Materials to use



### Background

In the United States nearly 2.5 million people report an exposure to poisoning annually. The overwhelming majority occurred at home.

### Poisoning Trends by Age



Source: National Safety Council

A poison is any product or substance that can harm someone if it is used in the wrong way, by the wrong person, or in the wrong amount. Examples of possible poisons include some household products, chemicals at work or in the environment, drugs (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal, illegal, or animal medicines), plants, and bites and stings.

Poisons can come in four forms:

- Solids (medicine pills, powders, granular pesticides, etc.)
- Liquids (soap, cleaning supplies, syrup medicines, lotions, snake or insect venom, etc.)
- Sprays (spray paint, insecticides, cleaning products, etc.)
- Gas (carbon monoxide, air pollution, gas fumes, etc.)

## Most Common Substance Risk by Age Group at Greatest Risk

	Hazardous Household Chemicals	Plants	Drugs	Alcohol	CO	Total
Children	58.9	0.5	30.3	3.4	6.1	100.0%
Teens	20.2	1.6	52.5	20.8	4.9	100.0%
Adults	22.2	3.7	50.0	11.1	13.0	100.0%
Elderly	25.9	1.2	52.9	7.1	12.9	100.0%

*Source: National Safety Council*

There are actions that the public can take to protect themselves and their families from poisonings:

- **Proper use of a product or medication** – Products and medications can hurt you if they are used the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person.
- **Proper storage** – Don't store food and cleansers together. Poisons should be kept up high, out of sight, and locked up.
- **Recognize look-a-like products** – Household products and medications come in attractive and colorful containers and packaging.
- **Supervision** – When children are unsupervised, this increases the risk of child poisonings. Poisonings occur most frequently at meal times when parents/caregivers are busy preparing meals.

These prevention messages can be relayed to the public in a number of ways, including presentations for civic organizations, the PTA, and teachers, and safety and health fairs. To get started, review the [Strategies for Implementing the Kit](#).





### Strategies for Implementing the Kit

**There are almost 2.5 million poison exposures in the United States annually. The overwhelming majority occurred at home.**

By helping members of the community identify potential poisons and learn how to lessen the risks, these exposures and deaths can be reduced. You can present important information in a number of ways and highlight it at different times. Poison prevention awareness should be promoted year-round; however, there are certain times when the number of unintentional poisonings escalates due to specific activities within a season or holiday.

Poison prevention messages can be highlighted around:

- **Winter:** Antifreeze is highly hazardous, and exposures are common during cold, wintery conditions. Carbon monoxide is also an issue during this time of year.
- **Spring:** Spring cleaning causes an increase in the use of household cleaners and other chemicals, such as pesticides, that can increase unintentional poisonings.
- **National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW):** NPPW is an opportunity during the third week of March to amplify poison prevention, specifically hazardous chemical safety, in a nationwide effort and through local activities.
- **Summer:** Warmer months mean more time outdoors. Keep in mind that also means a higher likelihood of contact with poisonous animals such as snakes, insects such as bees and spiders. This increases the use of repellents which may be harmful if used improperly or in large amounts. Summer also brings about hurricane season, making it important to emphasize safety when using generators, a potential source of carbon monoxide poisoning. Pool, spa, lawn and garden chemicals are also prevalent in the summer.
- **Fall:** This is a crucial time to emphasize medication safety as medicine consumption rises during cold and flu season. Halloween provides an opportunity to highlight the importance of consumption safety, such as reviewing each piece of candy before ingestion.

Poison prevention messages can underscore the importance of poison safety, especially during specific times of the year. Below are examples of potential outreach opportunities you can consider during these times. Click on the link for more details on each one.

## [Presentations to Civic Organizations](#)

Most communities have a number of civic organizations such as Elk Lodges, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and Chamber of Commerce. The members of these organizations are usually the town leaders and they are interested in promoting the public good. If they understand the risks and prevention of poisonings, they can help to disseminate the information.

## [Presentations at Schools – PTA and Teachers](#)

Most schools have Parent Teacher Association meetings on a monthly basis. The meeting held in March, which includes National Poison Prevention Week, would be a good opportunity to present information on poison prevention. There might also be an opportunity to present the information to teachers during one of their in-service days.

## [Classroom Activities](#)

Depending on the age of the students, there are a number of different activities that can be conducted in the classroom. Every year the National Poison Prevention Week Council holds a poster contest. There are two age categories: 8 and younger, and 9 to 13. For older students, consider sponsoring a science fair project on poison prevention. There are also displays that help to convey poison prevention information to children.

## [Safety or Health Fairs](#)

Another effective way to disseminate poison prevention messages to the public is through safety and health fairs. Many communities have safety fairs: a large company might have one for its employees; the hospital might sponsor one; there are state and county fairs; the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or 4-H Club might hold one, sometimes real estate offices hold them, etc. The PowerPoint presentation or the Fact or Fiction Quiz be play continuously to draw people to the booth; attendees can test themselves with the flipchart, and receive handouts to take home to their families.

## **Presentations to Specialized Groups**

### **[Doctors' Offices and Clinics](#)**

Visit the local emergency clinics, health clinics, and doctors' offices to request permission to have a poison prevention display in their waiting room. This display can include posters, brochures, the Poison Help Stickers, and various other

materials that can be obtained by calling the poison control center number, 1-800-222-1222, and asking for the poison educator.

### **Local Retailers**

Sometimes local retailers will allow temporary displays in their stores, especially if some of the products they sell are potentially poisonous. Try contacting grocery stores and supermarkets, pet stores, hardware stores, gardening stores, automotive parts stores, and pharmacies. Some of the activities can include setting up a table to distribute brochures and fact sheets; placing fact sheets or brochures in with every purchase; displaying posters; setting up a window display; running a PowerPoint presentation.

### **Animal Clubs**

Dog owners use specialized products for the cleaning and health of their dog that can be potentially hazardous to both people and pets if not used, stored, and disposed of properly. Give presentation during meeting, hand out brochures, and submit newsletter article.

### **Garden Clubs**

Gardeners have a wide range of pesticides at their disposal. However, they should use pesticides properly and never use anything before reading the instructions.

### **Hobbyists**

People who are involved in a variety of art and craft processes should be aware of potentially hazardous supplies. This would include teachers, art studios, arts and craft material supply stores.

### **Working with the Media**

You can use the media to deliver your message or to help promote your poison prevention event.



### **Presentations to Civic Organizations**

- Objective:** Raise the public's awareness about the risks of poisonings, to themselves and their families.
- Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes during one of their regularly scheduled meetings
- Setting:** Meeting room
- Equipment:** Laptop computer, LCD projector, screen or blank wall
- Research:** Match poison prevention information with the needs of the organization you are interested in approaching.
- Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, practice with PowerPoints, choose which materials to hand out, and read them prior to presentation.
- Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentation: Poison Prevention for Everyone](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: Parents & Childcare Providers](#)  
[PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Types of Poisons in the Home](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Pesticides in the Home](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Carbon Monoxide](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Poisonous Plants](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)
- Marketing:** Make announcements at several of the organization's meetings ahead of time. Place notices in their newsletter and through their listservs. Be sure to give them your information in plenty of time for them to notify their members.



### **Presentations to Teachers or PTA**

- Objective:** Raise the public's awareness about the risks of poisonings, to themselves and their families.
- Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes
- Setting:** Cafeteria or classroom
- Equipment:** Laptop computer, LCD projector, screen or blank wall
- Research:** Find out their interests. Ask what the PTA is working on. Do the parents have specific concerns? Can the teachers incorporate the material into their lesson plans?
- Preparation:** Introduce yourself, using the [Sample Letter to the School](#). Read [Background](#) information, practice with PowerPoints, choose which materials to hand out, and read them prior to presentation.
- Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentation: Parents & Childcare Providers](#)  
[PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Types of Poisons in the Home](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Carbon Monoxide](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Poisonous Plants](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Brochure: Preventing Poisonings at Home](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)
- Marketing:** Make announcements at several of the PTA's meetings ahead of time, make announcements in the PTA newsletter, send [flyers](#) home with the students, place notices in the teachers' mailbox. Be sure to give them your information in plenty of time for them to notify their members.



### Classroom Activities

**Objective:** To help children understand the risks of poisonings and how to prevent them.

**Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes

**Setting:** Classroom

**Equipment:** None

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information and make sure the [messages](#) conveyed to the children are simple and easy to understand. Have handouts for the children to take home to their family. Contact the poison control center at 1-800-222-1222 for items to give to the children (magnets, stickers, etc.)

You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

**Materials:** [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#)  
[Activity: Secret Message 1](#) (Ages 8 to 11)  
[Activity: Secret Message 2](#) (Ages 8 to 11)  
[Poster Contest Information](#) (Ages 5 and younger; 9 to 13)  
[Science Fair Project Information for Students](#) (Ages 13 and older)  
[Brochure: Preventing Poisonings at Home](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)

**Marketing:** You can supply the poster contest information and the science fair project information with a letter to the school requesting permission to talk to the children in the classroom.



### Safety or Health Fair

- Objective:** Raise the public's awareness about the risks of poisonings, to themselves and their families.
- Time Needed:** Half day to whole day
- Setting:** Community center, school, library, fairgrounds or other large site open to the public
- Equipment:** Laptop computer
- Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, become familiar with the material in the handouts, and call poison control center (1-800-222-1222) to receive additional materials and items (magnets, stickers, etc.) to hand out.
- You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).
- Materials:** [PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#)  
[Brochure: Preventing Poisonings at Home](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)
- Marketing:** Check local newspapers' calendar of events to see what safety or health fairs are already scheduled in your area and contact them early enough to be able to get a booth. Place announcements in your newsletter; ask local partners' to place in their newsletters; put flyers in public libraries and retail stores; ask local radio station to do a PSA.





### Working with the Media

The media can be used to deliver a message or to help promote a poison prevention event. This document provides the tools to determine what is newsworthy, how to create a media list, what materials to develop and tips for pitching a story.

#### In the News

When trying to use the media to deliver a message or promote an event, it helps to know what factors the media will consider when deciding whether to cover the story or event:

- **Impact**, or the number of people affected by the issue, is important. Leverage the story by providing context and statistics, such as the fact that more than 2 million poisonings are reported each year. To gain credibility, let reporters know you are participating in or organizing a [National Poison Prevention Week](#) event or other local event about poison prevention.
- **Proximity** of the event is imperative. National outlets probably won't cover a small community event, but the local outlets may stop by. Knowing local poisoning statistics also can help.
- **Prominence** of those attending the event may increase media attention. Let reporters know if local celebrities or political officials support the cause.
- **Controversy and success stories** always are of interest to the media. For example, highlight a person's unintentional poisoning and his or her success in calling the toll-free Poison Help line. Real-life stories are more interesting to general media outlets than raw facts and reports. There is a better chance of getting more in-depth coverage if there is a human interest element — someone who has been personally affected by a poisoning.
- **Timeliness** of the outreach is essential. For a weekly or monthly newsletter, events that have occurred since its previous issue may be considered timely, whereas for broadcast outlets, a reporter might only be interested in "breaking news."

Hosting a local event is often not enough to pique the interest of a reporter. The reporter must have a sense of the impact the issue has on the community and pair it with a local story to provide color. For example, the issuing of a local government proclamation during [National Poison Prevention Week](#) is an example of a story that may pique the interest of a local reporter because it demonstrates a community-wide effort to promote poison awareness and involves prominent political figures. If paired with a family that experienced a poison incident in their



home that other local families can relate to, this is a story the local newspaper would likely take interest in.

**Quick Tip: Monitor the news and build on the trends that are capturing attention when researching where and how to pitch, or convince, a reporter to cover the story.**

## Targeting a Specific Audience

Determine the target audience. Different stories are effective in different sections of newspapers. Articles on unintentional poisonings written for parents with young children are more likely to be found in the health section. Articles written for gardeners on the proper use of pesticides are more likely to be found in the home and garden section. Story materials can also be submitted for specialized audiences. These can be placed in the newsletters of garden clubs, schools, kennel clubs, and community service organizations. The [fact sheets](#) in this kit can be used to write these articles. Determining the target audience for the story will allow it to be pitched to the reporter/editor who would be most likely to write about it.

**Quick Tip: Having an audience to target will help shape your media list and pitches – it is possible for a story to target more than one audience.**

## Creating a Media List

The next step is to create a media list, a useful tool that will help keep an accurate, up-to-date, organized list of reporters to contact when there is a story. The list should include the name of the outlet, contact names, phone numbers, addresses, fax numbers and e-mail addresses.

Look for stories related to poisonings in daily and weekly newspapers, local television affiliates, radio stations, newswire services, Internet news outlets, magazines, newsletters and business trade publications in the area. Reporters who covered an issue before or demonstrate a concern for a particular population (e.g., parents, seniors) are likely to be interested in another story on that topic.

To get more ideas of who to include on the media list and their contact information and to find reporters' contact information, use the media directories at the local library or bookstore (Bacon's directories, the Yellow Book, Gebbies All-In-One Directory, Lexus Nexus and Google News). Call the outlet to verify their contact information and determine if they are the most appropriate reporters for the story.

Quick Tip: **Frequently update the media list to stay current with all changes. Remember that media sources (radio, newspapers, and TV) and various clubs and service organizations often have online versions of their publications.**

## Materials

Reporters are flooded with story pitches daily, so provide them with clear and concise information to make developing the story an easy decision. The more time reporters can spend developing the story, the more accurate and detailed it will be. Consider developing one or more of the following materials to help garner media coverage:

- **Media advisory** – A one-page invitation to the event that outlines the schedule or specific details, along with a brief description; distributed in advance of an event (a week) to invite media to attend. This tends to follow a “who, what, when, where” format.
- **Press release** – Provides background, describes the activities, and includes a quote by the group’s spokesperson; distributed the day of the event or day when new information or release of information is issued to provide reporters with details. When writing a press release, assume that the reporter will read the release and write the story directly from the release – think about what the story should say and what the headline should be.
- **Op-ed** – Expresses the opinion of the writer about important issues. To write an op-ed, take a side on the topic, support the case, make it relevant and include areas of expertise. The more high-profile the op-ed author is, the more likely it is to be placed. Before drafting, review recent op-ed submissions in the publication to get a sense of what the publication has been running and by whom.
- **Letter to the editor** – A short (one or two paragraphs) and timely response to a news article, such as in follow-up to a relevant story with poisoning statistics. Submit the letter within a few hours after first reading the story – time is of the essence.

When submitting materials for consideration to a reporter, be prepared to also give them the names of local experts (someone from the local poison control center, a doctor, a veterinarian, someone with a personal poisoning experience, etc.), from whom they can get a quote. Give them additional materials, such as fact sheets (from this toolkit or others), sources for additional data and the link to a Web site (see Additional Resources section of this kit).

Quick Tip: **For op-eds and letters to the editor, most newspapers have specific guidelines that submissions must meet. Be sure to know what those are, including word counts, method of submission, etc.**

## Pitching Your Story

Pitching, or introducing a story to a reporter and explaining why it should be covered, is an important part of the process. Be prepared for the pitch. Reporters don't have a lot of time, and they receive a lot of pitches. Make this one stand out by providing the important information quickly.

Most pitches are sent by e-mail. Customize the cover letter appropriately for each person receiving the pitch. Often, reporters may only read the first one or two sentences, so a catchy subject and lead sentence are essential. Reporters may not take the time (or may not be able) to open attachments unless they have specifically requested them, so it is important to paste any materials below the electronic signature, indicating in the text of the e-mail that it is there.

Make a follow-up phone call to reporters and ask them if they had a chance to read the materials. If no one answers, do not leave a voicemail right away, but instead keep trying back at other times. Persistence is key. Call during the middle of the day (between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.), and try not to call late in the day or week (such as Friday afternoon). Many reporters are often on a deadline in the afternoon and are looking for their story ideas earlier in the week. Do not press a reporter who is on a deadline. For radio stations, mention that they can download and play the Poison Help public service announcements available at [www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov).

Work to build relationships with the reporters and use every opportunity to spread the word – post a comment online in response to a recent article and find other ways to get the word out about poison prevention in the community. Be sure to always identify yourself when making a comment on a story – transparency is critical.

**Quick Tip: Write out your pitch and practice your pitches with colleagues or in the mirror to perfect your strategy. Also, read what the reporter has written in the past and reference a story if applicable in your pitch.**

For more information on how to draw media attention to poison prevention during National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) and other events, visit [www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov) to view the NPPW Planner.



# **Poison Prevention for Everyone**

In the United States nearly  
2.5 million people report an  
exposure to poisoning  
annually.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

A poison is any product or substance that can harm someone if it is used in the wrong way, by the wrong person, or in the wrong amount.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Most Common Substance Risk by Age Group at Greatest Risk

	Hazardous Household Chemicals	Plants	Drugs	Alcohol	CO	Total
Children	58.9	0.5	30.3	3.4	6.1	100%
Teens	20.2	1.6	52.5	20.8	4.9	100%
Adults	22.2	3.7	50.0	11.1	13.0	100%
Elderly	25.9	1.2	52.9	7.1	12.9	100%

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Most Common Substance Risk by Age Group at Greatest Risk

- Some household products
- Chemicals at work or in the environment
- Drugs (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal, illegal or animal medicines)
- Plants
- Venomous bites

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



# Medications

Medicine can help us to get well when we are sick. However, when giving or taking medicines, always remember the 5 "rights":

- Right Medication
- Right Person
- Right Amount
- Right Way
- Right Time



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Cleaning products

- Can be poisonous if inhaled, ingested, or splashed on the skin or in the eyes.
- Can make deadly combinations when used together.
- Should be kept in their original containers, clearly labeled.
- Read all directions and warnings **BEFORE** using a product.



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Health and Beauty Products

- Cosmetics and other personal care items range in toxicity
- Perfumes, aftershaves, colognes and mouthwash all contain alcohol
- Should be kept out of the reach of children



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Outdoor Items

- Poisonous plants are commonly found in our homes, gardens, and public areas
- Plants poison through contact with the skin and contact with the mouth including swallowing
- Reactions range from mild skin irritation to much more serious effects



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Pesticides

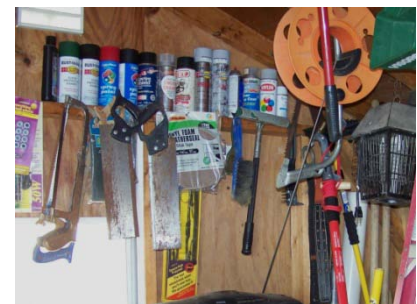
- Read the directions on the label carefully BEFORE using
- Wear protective clothing
- Wash hands after contact with pesticides
- Keep all fertilizers and pesticides in their original containers under lock and key



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Garage Items

- Fluids for the car, home improvement products, and other chemicals can be harmful and even fatal
- Store automotive and household products in a locked area
- Keep chemicals in their original containers
- Read directions BEFORE using the product



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Prevention Action

- Proper use of a product or medication
- Proper storage
- Recognize look-a-like products
- Supervision

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Keep the nationwide poison  
control center's number  
**(800) 222-1222**  
beside every phone in your home  
and programmed into  
your cell phone.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge





# **An Introduction for Parents and Child Care Providers**

The overwhelming majority of poisonings occur at home. Although exposure to hazardous substances is scary and dangerous at any age, children have a special vulnerability that heightens the danger.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers:

- In 2006 there were 2.4 million poison exposure calls.
- Children younger than 3 years were involved in 38.0%.
- 50.9% occurred with children younger than 6 years.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Children's bodies, behaviors (such as putting objects and hands in their mouth), and size make them different from and more vulnerable than adults to many environmental health hazards.



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

In proportion to their size, children breathe more air, drink more water, and eat more food than adults. This means that they are potentially at greater risk of exposure to poisons.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

Some of the most common household products can be very hazardous. These include:

- cleaning substances
- laundry products
- cosmetics
- garden supplies
- automotive products
- pesticides
- toys and hobby materials
- fuels
- paints and pool products

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

These products come in many shapes, sizes and colors which can easily enter the body through the mouth, eyes, nose and skin.

- Liquids
- Powders
- Granules
- Sprays
- Aerosols

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Most often, children are poisoned in their own homes. The top four reported reasons why children accidentally poison themselves are:

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# Number 1: Poisons are not stored properly.

- Leaving recently used medication bottles on a counter or table.
- Bottles on the counter or table, purses or diaper bags sitting on the floor
- Opened cleaning products left unattended for "just one second."

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

## Number 2: Children are curious.

- Children are naturally curious about the taste, smell and texture of products.
- Children may be interested in how spray containers work.
- By swallowing, smelling or spraying a product children learn more about it.
- By smelling, touching, and tasting, they learn about the world.
- Brightly colored liquids, spray containers, pills, and leafy or flowering plants attract children.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

## **Number 3: Children think a poison is something other than a poison.**

- Children can think fuels, cough syrup, and shampoo are safe to drink, because they look like fruit punch or soft drinks.
- Children may think the odor of a product is similar to a liquid that is safe to drink.
- Many poisons look or taste similar to other things. Medicine tablets look and taste like candy. Antifreeze tastes sweet. Red mouthwash looks like fruit punch.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Number 4: Children imitate the behavior of adults.

Children copy what their parents, grandparents, brothers, or sisters do, such as:

- taking medication
- drinking colored liquids
- cleaning house
- spraying chemicals



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

## To prevent poisonings:

- Set up safe storage areas for all household chemicals and medicines.
- Use child-resistant caps.
- Keep products in their original containers.
- Keep purses and diaper bags out of reach.



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# To prevent poisonings:

- Keep alcohol drinks and mouthwash away from children.
- Do not store food items and non food items together.
- Keep houseplants out of a young child's reach.
- Teach your children never to put plants in their mouths.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# When you buy a product that is potentially poisonous, read the label first so you will:

- Understand the intended use
- Buy the proper amount
- Know how to store unused portions
- Know how to dispose of empty containers

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Keep the nationwide poison  
control center's number  
**(800) 222-1222**  
beside every phone in your home and  
programmed into your cell phone.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**





# **Fact or Fiction?**

**Poisonings usually involve bleach and other household cleaners.**

**FICTION:** Household cleaners are just one type of poison.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**You have to swallow poison in order for it to harm you.**

**FICTION:** Poisons come in various forms and harm through numerous pathways.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Carbon monoxide is a poison that can kill children and adults.**

**FACT:** Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas. When a person breathes in CO, it goes into the organs instead of oxygen.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Drug overdosing and other poisonings happen more often than guns or automobile accidents, or house fires.**

**FACT:** Nearly 2.5 million people report an exposure to poisoning annually.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**It is okay to take someone else's prescription medicine if you have the same symptoms.**

**FICTION:** You should never take someone else's prescription medicine.

**CAUTION, WARNING, and DANGER** all mean the same thing on a package.

**FICTION: CAUTION** is the lowest level of potential harm. **WARNING** means it could cause serious illness and the product is flammable. **DANGER** is the highest level.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**There are only a few  
poisonous plants.**

**FICTION:** An estimated 700+  
species of plants growing in North  
America have caused illness or  
death in humans.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**It is okay to combine household cleaners to make a stronger cleaner.**

**FICTION:** Never mix chemicals. Doing so can create a poisonous gas.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Pesticides are the only household products that cause poisonings.**

**FICTION:** Some of the most common household products can be very hazardous.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**If you don't completely use a pesticide, it is best to put it in a smaller container.**

**FICTION:** You should always keep pesticides and other hazardous chemicals in their original container.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**The staff of the poison control centers are all poison experts.**

**FACT:** Poison centers are staffed by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**The poison control number should only be called when someone shows signs for poisoning.**

**FICTION:** Do not wait for signs of poisoning. Many poisonings can be avoided with a call to the poison center.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Poison centers are not just for children; they should be used for adults as well.**

**FACT:** More than 70 percent of all poisoning deaths occur in adults ages 20 to 59.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



### Interactive Exhibit Ideas

**DO NOT walk away from a display if you have poisons on the table!**

Many poison prevention educators have developed displays and games that they use to educate the public on various aspects of poison prevention. Call the nationwide toll-free poison prevention number – 800-222-1222 – to talk with your local poison educator about their displays and games. Many of the local poison control centers have educational materials available on their website. Go the website for the American Association of Poison Control Centers, <http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/>, and click on the “Find Local Poison Center” to find information about your local poison control center.

Below are some suggestions for activities and displays that you can make and use.

### Candy/Medicine Display

Make a display of candies and medicines that look alike by gluing them side by side on a piece of paper. Put the paper on a poster board or in a clear plastic box frame. Let children guess which ones are medicines and which ones are candies.

**Explain that in real life, they should NOT guess, but “Ask Before Tasting”!**

Some examples for the display include:

- White Tylenol caplets and white Good n’ Plenty
- Tums and Necco wafers
- Benadryl and pink Good n’ Plenty
- Red round Sudafed pills and Red Hots
- Colored gel-caps (any kind) and jelly beans
- Pastel round flat antacids and Sweetarts
- Baby aspirin and Sweetarts
- Jelly bean vitamins and jelly beans
- Gummi bear vitamins and gummi bears
- Vita-balls and gum balls
- Aspergum and cinnamon gum
- Round coated Advil and tropical M&M’s
- Brown round Tylenol and M&M’s or Skittles



*Gummi bear vitamins  
and gummi bears*

## Poison Look-a-likes

Make a display of poisons and food and drinks. Glue the solid items to a piece of poster boards and place the liquids in clear containers and glue the lids shut.

Some examples of items include:

- Mothballs next to marshmallows
- Chocolate Ex-lax next to chocolate candy bar
- Grape flavored cough medicine (liquid) next to grape juice
- Clear liquids in 3 containers: Vodka or rubbing alcohol, vinegar, water.
- Blue liquids in 3 containers: PowerAde, Windex, blue mouthwash.
- Yellow liquids: Pine Sol, a yellow liquor, apple juice. (You'll need a fresh apple juice every time you display it because it ferments and gets cloudy.)

*Courtesy of Connecticut Poison Control Center:  
<http://poisoncontrol.uchc.edu/education/programs/healthfair.htm>*

## True or False Flipchart

Print out the questions and answers for the [True or False Flipchart](#) on cover stock (heavy paper) with each question and answer on a separate piece of paper. Laminate the sheets and punch three holes in top of the sheets. Place the sheets in a ½" or 1" three ring binder. This will hold the pages together, but allow the pages to be flipped. To get the display to stand on the table, fold the notebook inside out so the rings are facing upward. Put the first part of the Velcro dots in the two outside corners of both the front and back covers of the binders. Put the second part of the Velcro dots on both ends of two pieces of ribbons that are about 5" to 6" long. Then join the ribbons to the Velcro dots that are in the corners. This will form a tent that will allow the questions and answers to be read then flipped over.





## National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) Poster Contest

### Guidelines:

1. The contest is open to two age categories
  - Ages 8 and younger
  - Ages 9 to 13
2. The purpose is to identify a poster that can be used to educate the public about ways to prevent unintentional poisonings in the home.
3. The deadline for entry is June 1<sup>st</sup> each year.
4. There are two themes for the poster contest: Poisonings Span a Lifetime and Children Act Fast, So Do Poisons. Entries should illustrate a message that communicates that poisonings can happen to people of any age including children, adults and the elderly. Visit <http://www.poisonprevention.org> for poison safety resources, fast facts, and ideas.
5. Entries **should not** include any state or regional logos or symbols. Trademark symbols, brand names, or characters (e.g., Snoopy) are also prohibited.
6. There are no size requirements for submission. Entries can be horizontal or vertical.
7. The original art must be submitted. Copies will not be accepted.
8. Each entry must be accompanied by the Artwork Release and Submission Form ([www.poisonprevention.org](http://www.poisonprevention.org)) and all information must be legibly filled out.
9. All poster entries should be mailed to:
10. American Association of Poison Control Centers – Poster Contest
11. 515 King Street, Suite 510, Alexandria, VA 22314
12. By signing the Artwork Release and Submission Form, parent/guardian gives permission to the Council to adapt, reproduce and distribute the posters nationally.
13. The following information will be added to the winning poster: Poison Hotline toll free number, Poison Prevention Week date, artist name and age, submitting organization, Poison Prevention Week Council mailing address and website.
14. The posters will be judged by members of the National Poison Prevention Week Council. The artist of the winning poster will be notified by July 1<sup>st</sup> each year.



### Messages for Children

**These are the messages to be conveyed. They will need to be tailored for the grade level.**

- Poisons can make people sick, or even kill them.
- Poisons can be things you eat, breathe, touch, or get in your eyes.
- Poisons may be products your parents use every day.
- If you think you or someone else ate or drank something that is poison, tell a grownup right away.
- Only take medicines that your parent or caregiver gives to you.
- If you are not sure what something is, do not eat or drink it.
- Always wash your hands before eating.
- Always wash your hands after playing outside.
- Poisons should be locked up and out of reach.



### Science Fair Project Information for Student

Copy and paste this onto your own letterhead and fill out the appropriate information.

In conjunction with [Name of School]'s regular science fair project, [Name of Your Organization] is sponsoring a special prize for the best science fair project on the subject of poisonings.

Many common household products can be poisonous. This includes products such as kitchen, laundry, and bath disinfectants; cockroach sprays and baits; products that kill mold and mildew; flea and tick sprays and powders; pet collars; insect repellants; rat poison; some lawn and garden products; personal care products such as mouthwash, deodorant, cosmetics, nail polish, perfumes; automotive fluids; and some swimming pool chemicals. Many of the labels on these products contain a lot of important information, such as how dangerous it can be, how much to buy, how to use it, how to store, and how to get rid of the empty containers.

Your science fair project must follow the guidelines of your school, so check with your science teacher. Some possible formats include an essay, a 3D representation, or an experiment. It can deal with any aspect of poisonings, such as a label design, statistics on poisonings, analysis of a label's ingredients, poison prevention information, where poisons are commonly found, the effectiveness of child-resistant packaging, medication safety, use of green products to reduce toxicity, product look-a-likes, etc. Do **NOT** experiment with poisons themselves. Pesticides should be applied only when necessary, by an adult and in strict accordance with label directions. If you want your science fair project to be considered for this additional prize, please fill in the information below and return to [Contact Person] by [Deadline Date]. Good luck!

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's School: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by: [Name and Address of Your Organization]

Deadline Date: [Day Month, Year]

Prizes: [List Prizes]



### Secret Message 1

Use the code key to decipher an important secret poison prevention message.

#### Code:

26 = A	17 = J	8 = S
25 = B	16 = K	7 = T
24 = C	15 = L	6 = U
23 = D	14 = M	5 = V
22 = E	13 = N	4 = W
21 = F	12 = O	3 = X
20 = G	11 = P	2 = Y
19 = H	10 = Q	1 = Z
18 = I	9 = R	

26 15 4 26 2 8 4 26 8 19 2 12 6 9 19 26 13  
23 8

25 22 21 12 9 22 22 26 7 18 13 20





### Secret Message 2

Use the code key to decipher an important secret poison prevention message.

#### Code:

26 = A

25 = B

24 = C

23 = D

22 = E

21 = F

20 = G

19 = H

18 = I

17 = J

16 = K

15 = L

14 = M

13 = N

12 = O

11 = P

10 = Q

9 = R

8 = S

7 = T

6 = U

5 = V

4 = W

3 = X

2 = Y

1 = Z

12 13 15 2 7 26 16 22 14 22 23 18 24 18 13 22 8

7 19 26 7 2 12 6 9 11 26 9 22 13 7 8

20 18 5 22 7 12 2 12 6





### Sample Letter to School

Copy and paste this letter onto your own letterhead and fill out the appropriate information.

[Date]

[School name]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip]

Dear Principal [Name]:

We would like to work with students in [grade] by giving them simple poison prevention messages, helping them complete some handouts on poison prevention, holding a poison prevention poster contest, or providing suggestions for a science fair project.

Annually there were almost 2.5 million poison exposures calls to poison centers in the United States. The overwhelming majority occurred at home and 51 percent occurred with children younger than 6 years. According to our local poison control center, there were [Get Statistics from Local Poison Control Center] poisonings in [Location] alone in [Year].

Many common household products can be poisonous, including pesticides, household cleaners, medicines, personal care products, lighter fluids, cosmetics, and automotive fluids. Although these products can be useful, they can be dangerous if used carelessly or if they are not stored properly.

I will call you next week to see if we can join together in addressing this serious public health problem affecting our children.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title]



### Sample PTA Flyer

**To:** The Parents of Children at [Name of School]

**Who:** [Name of Your Organization]

**What:** **Poison Prevention Presentation**

**Where:** [Name of School]

**When:** [Date & Time of Meeting]

**Why:** **There are almost 2.5 million poison exposures in the United States annually. The overwhelming majority occurred at home.**

[Name of your organization] is interested in the well-being of the citizens in our community and will be giving a poison prevention presentation to help keep our children safe and healthy.

For more information, please contact us at:

[Name]  
[Organization]  
[Address]  
[City, State, Zip]  
[Telephone]  
[Email]  
[Web Site]

**Copy and paste this flyer onto your own letterhead and fill out the appropriate information.**



# True or False?

Answer True or False to each question  
and then flip the card to check your answer.



**Good Luck!**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**A poison is any product or substance that can harm someone if it is used in the wrong way, by the wrong person, or in the wrong amount.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True

In 2006 the 61 poison centers in the United States received 2,403,539 calls regarding human exposures to poisoning.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**All poisons are liquids.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

Poisons can be liquid, solid,  
gas, or spray.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Most poisoning deaths occur in  
children ages 6 and younger.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

Although children are the most frequently exposed, most poisoning deaths occur in adults.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**If you only have a little bit of a household chemical left, it is best to put it into a smaller container.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**False**

Keep products in original containers. The labels have information you may need in case of a poisoning.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Carbon monoxide is a poison  
that can kill children and  
adults.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas. It enters the body through the lungs, and prevents the blood from carrying and using oxygen properly, and harms the brain and other organs.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**People are hurt more often in  
cars, fires, or other accidents  
than by poison.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

Poisonings happen more often.  
Nearly 2.5 million people report an  
exposure to poisoning annually.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**CAUTION, WARNING, and  
DANGER all mean the same  
thing on a package.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

**CAUTION** is the lowest level of potential harm.

**WARNING** means it could cause serious illness.

**DANGER** is the highest level of potential harm.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**There are only a few  
poisonous plants.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**False**

There are more than 700  
species of poisonous plants  
growing in North America.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Pesticides are the only  
household products that  
cause poisonings.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## False

Some common hazardous household products include: cosmetics; pesticides; cleaning, laundry, garden, automotive, pool products; hobby materials; fuels; and paints.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**It is okay to combine  
household cleaners to make  
a stronger cleaner.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False**

Never mix chemicals. Doing so  
can create a poisonous gas.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**It is okay to take someone  
else's prescription medicine  
if you have the same  
symptoms.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## False

Never take someone else's prescription medicine because their doctor took in consideration many factors (their medical history, other medications they are taking, age, weight, etc.).

**The staff of the poison  
control centers are all  
poison experts.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**True**

Poison centers are staffed by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Poison centers are not just  
for children; they should be  
used for adults as well.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True**

More than 70 percent of all poisoning deaths occur in adults ages 20 to 59.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



## Background

**Homes, sheds, basements and garages contain potentially hazardous chemicals that should be used, stored, and discarded with special care.**

A hazardous substance means any chemical or mixture that may be harmful to the environment and to human health if inhaled, swallowed, or comes in contact with the skin. These substances include items that are valuable for personal care and home and yard maintenance. However, misuse, especially when products are used in inappropriate applications or quantities, can cause illness, injury, and even death.

Some products are easily recognized as a potential source of poisonings, but others may not be as obvious. Many common household products are pesticides. A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended for preventing, destroying, or repelling any pest. Pests include insects, mice and other animals, unwanted plants (weeds), fungi, or microorganisms like bacteria and viruses.



Not all hazardous chemicals are pesticides. Cosmetics and personal care products such as hairspray, hair remover, fingernail polish and polish remover, hair coloring products, and lice shampoo, are all potentially poisonous.

In the 2007 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System, it is reported that:

- Cosmetics and personal care products were involved in 225,410 exposures
- 172,541 of them in children 5 years old and younger
- Household cleaning products were involved in 216,228 exposures
- 122,832 of them in children 5 years old and younger
- Pesticides were involved in 96,307 exposures
- 44,644 of them in children 5 years old and younger



There are strategies for reducing the risk of poisoning by hazardous household chemicals:

- Read the label prior to buying so you understand its toxicity.
- Only buy the amount that you need.
- Read and follow the instructions proper precautions and use.
- Keep hazardous products, including a cosmetics and personal care products out of the reach of small children.
- Do not leave products unattended or unsealed.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while using hazardous products.
- Make certain all products are clearly labeled before storing them.
- Leave products in their original containers.

These prevention messages can be relayed to employees in a number of ways, including brown bag lunch presentations, safety/health fairs, and payroll stuffers. To get started, review the [Strategies for Implementing the Kit](#).



## Strategies for Implementing the Kit

**Homes, sheds, basements and garages contain potentially hazardous chemicals that should be used, stored, and discarded with special care.**

It is important that the public know the hazards that some household chemicals can cause and how to prevent exposure to them. This information can be presented in a number of ways and highlighted at different times to educate the public on household hazards. Hazardous chemical safety awareness should be promoted year-round; however, there are certain times of the year when the number of unintentional poisonings escalates due to specific activities.

Hazard safety messages can be highlighted around:

- **Winter:** Antifreeze is highly hazardous and exposures are common during cold, wintery conditions. Carbon monoxide is also an issue during this time of year.
- **Spring:** Spring cleaning causes an increase in the use of household cleaners and other chemicals, such as pesticides, that can increase the opportunities for unintentional poisonings.
- **National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW):** NPPW is an opportunity during the third week of March to amplify poison prevention, specifically hazardous chemical safety, in a nationwide effort and through local activities.
- **Summer:** Insect-repellant safety should be underscored as exposure to insects causes an escalated use in deet and other repellants. At this time, hurricane season begins, making it important to emphasize safety when using generators, a potential source of carbon monoxide. Pool, spa, lawn and garden chemicals are also prevalent in the summer.
- **Fall:** This is a crucial time to emphasize medication safety as medicine consumption rises during cold and flu season.

Poison prevention messages can underscore the importance of hazardous chemicals safety, especially during specific times of the year. Below are examples of potential outreach opportunities. Click on the link for more details on each one.

### [Presentations to Civic Organizations](#)

Most communities have a number of civic organizations such as Elk Lodges, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and Chamber of Commerce. The members of these organizations are usually the town leaders and they are interested in promoting the public good. If they understand the risks hazardous household chemicals, they can help to disseminate the information.

## [Presentations at Schools – PTA and Teachers](#)

Most schools have Parent Teacher Association meetings on a monthly basis. The meeting held in March, which includes National Poison Prevention Week, would be a good opportunity to present information on poison prevention. There might also be an opportunity to present the information to teachers during one of their in-service days.

## [Activities in the Classroom](#)

Depending on the age of the students, there are a number of different activities that can be conducted in the classroom. Every year the National Poison Prevention Week Council holds a [poster contest](#). There are two age categories: 8 and younger, and 9 to 13. For older students, consider sponsoring a [Create a Label](#) project for hazardous household chemicals.

## [Safety and Health Fairs](#)

Another effective way to disseminate poison prevention messages to the public is through safety and health fairs. Many communities have safety fairs: a large company might have one for its employees; the hospital might sponsor one; there are state and county fairs; the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or 4-H Club might hold one, sometimes real estate offices hold them, etc. The PowerPoint can play continuously to draw people to the booth; attendees can test themselves with flip charts, and receive handouts to take home to their families.

## **Presentations to Specialized Groups**

### **[Doctors' Offices and Clinics](#)**

Visit the local emergency clinics, health clinics, and doctors' offices to request permission to have a poison prevention display in their waiting room. This display can include posters, brochures, the Poison Help Stickers, and various other materials that can be obtained by calling the poison control center number, 1-800-222-1222, and asking for the poison educator.

### **[Local Retailers](#)**

Sometimes local retailers will allow temporary displays in their stores, especially if some of the products they sell are potentially poisonous. Try contacting grocery stores and supermarkets, pet stores, hardware stores, gardening stores, automotive parts stores, and pharmacies. Some of the activities can include setting up a table to distribute brochures and fact sheets; placing fact sheets or brochures in with every purchase; displaying posters; setting up a window display; running a PowerPoint presentation.

## **Animal Clubs**

Dog owners use specialized products for the cleaning and health of their dog that can be potentially hazardous to both people and pets if not used, stored, and disposed of properly. Give presentation during meeting, hand out [brochures](#), and submit newsletter article.

## **Garden Clubs**

Gardeners have a wide range of pesticides at their disposal. However, they should use pesticides properly and never use anything before reading the instructions. Give presentation during meeting, hand out [brochures](#), and submit newsletter article.

## **Hobbyists**

People who are involved in a variety of art and craft processes should be aware of potentially hazardous supplies. This would include teachers, art studios, arts and craft material supply stores.

## **Working with the Media**

You can use the media to deliver your message or to help promote your poison prevention event.





## **Presentations to Civic Organizations**

**Objective:** Raise the public's awareness about the risks posed by hazardous household chemicals and how to reduce those risks.

**Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes during one their regularly scheduled meetings

**Setting:** Meeting room

**Equipment:** Laptop computer, LCD projector, screen or blank wall

**Research:** Match poison prevention information with the needs of the organization you are interested in approaching.

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, practice with PowerPoints, and choose which materials to hand out, and read them prior to presentation.

**Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentation: Room by Room Safety Check](#)  
[PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Common Hazardous Household Chemicals](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Understanding the Terms](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Safer Alternatives](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Disposal of Hazardous Products](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)

**Marketing:** Make announcements at several of the organization's meetings ahead of time. Place notices in their newsletter and through their listservs. Be sure to give them your information in plenty of time for them to notify their members.



### **Presentations to Teachers or PTA**

**Objective:** Raise the public's awareness about the risks posed by hazardous household chemicals and how to reduce those risks.

**Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes

**Setting:** Cafeteria or classroom

**Equipment:** Laptop computer, LCD projector, screen or blank wall

**Research:** Find out their interests. Ask what the PTA is working on. Do the parents have specific concerns? Can the teachers incorporate the material into their lesson plans?

**Preparation:** Introduce yourself, using the [Sample Letter to the School](#). Read [Background](#) information, practice with PowerPoints, and choose which materials to hand out and read them prior to presentation.

**Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentation: Room by Room Safety Check](#)  
[PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Common Hazardous Household Chemicals](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Understanding the Terms](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Safer Alternatives](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Disposal of Hazardous Products](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Household](#)  
[Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Kids](#)

**Marketing:** Make announcements at several of the PTA's meetings ahead of time, make announcements in the PTA newsletter, send [flyers](#) home with the students, place notices in the teachers' mailbox. Be sure to give them your information in plenty of time for them to notify their members.



### Classroom Activities

- Objective:** To help children understand what hazardous household chemicals are and how to avoid poisonings.
- Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes
- Setting:** Classroom
- Equipment:** None
- Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information and make sure the [messages](#) conveyed to the children are simple and easy to understand. Have handouts for the children to take home to their family. Contact the poison control center at 1-800-222-1222 for items to give to the children (magnets, stickers, etc.)

You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

- Materials:**
- [Activity: Create a Label](#)
  - [Activity: Poster Contest](#) (Ages 5 and younger; 9 to 13)
  - [Activity: Word Search](#)
  - [Activity: Cockroach Dinner](#)
  - [Flip Chart: Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room](#)
  - [Fact Sheet: Common Hazardous Household Chemicals](#)
  - [Fact Sheet: Safer Alternatives](#)
  - [Fact Sheet: Disposal of Hazardous Products](#)
  - [Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)
  - [Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)
  - [Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Kids](#)

- Marketing:** You can supply the poster contest information and the science fair project information with a [letter to the school](#) requesting permission to talk to the children in the classroom.



## Safety or Health Fair

**Objective:** Raise the public's awareness about the risks posed by hazardous household chemicals and how to reduce those risks.

**Time Needed:** Half day to whole day

**Setting:** Community center, school, library, fairgrounds or other large site open to the public

**Equipment:** Laptop computer

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, become familiar with the material in the handouts, and call poison control center (1-800-222-1222) to receive additional materials and items (magnets, stickers, etc.) to hand out.

You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for three different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

**Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentation: Room by Room Safety Check](#)  
[PowerPoint: Fact or Fiction](#)  
[Children's Activity: Word Search](#)  
[Children's Activity: Cockroach Dinner](#)  
[Flip Chart: Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room](#)  
[Flip Chart: True or False](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Common Hazardous Household Chemicals](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Safer Alternatives](#)  
[Fact Sheet: Disposal of Hazardous Products](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Brochure: Read the Label First! Protect Your Household](#)

**Marketing:** Check local newspapers' calendar of events to see what safety or health fairs are already scheduled in your area and contact them early enough to be able to get a booth. Place announcements in your newsletter; ask local partners' to place

in their newsletters; put flyers in public libraries and retail stores; ask local radio station to do a PSA.



### Working with the Media

The media can be used to deliver a message or to help promote a poison prevention event. This document provides the tools to determine what is newsworthy, how to create a media list, what materials to develop and tips for pitching a story.

### In the News

When trying to use the media to deliver a message or promote an event, it helps to know what factors the media will consider when deciding whether to cover the story or event:

- **Impact**, or the number of people affected by the issue, is important. Leverage the story by providing context and statistics, such as the fact that more than 2 million poisonings are reported each year. To gain credibility, let reporters know you are participating in or organizing a [National Poison Prevention Week](#) event or other local event about poison prevention.
- **Proximity** of the event is imperative. National outlets probably won't cover a small community event, but the local outlets may stop by. Knowing local poisoning statistics also can help.
- **Prominence** of those attending the event may increase media attention. Let reporters know if local celebrities or political officials support the cause.
- **Controversy and success stories** always are of interest to the media. For example, highlight a person's unintentional poisoning and his or her success in calling the toll-free Poison Help line. Real-life stories are more interesting to general media outlets than raw facts and reports. There is a better chance of getting more in-depth coverage if there is a human interest element — someone who has been personally affected by a poisoning.
- **Timeliness** of the outreach is essential. For a weekly or monthly newsletter, events that have occurred since its previous issue may be considered timely, whereas for broadcast outlets, a reporter might only be interested in "breaking news."

Hosting a local event is often not enough to pique the interest of a reporter. The reporter must have a sense of the impact the issue has on the community and pair it with a local story to provide color. For example, the issuing of a local government proclamation during [National Poison Prevention Week](#) is an example of a story that may pique the interest of a local reporter because it demonstrates a community-wide effort to promote poison awareness and involves prominent political figures. If paired with a family that experienced a poison incident in their

home that other local families can relate to, this is a story the local newspaper would likely take interest in.

**Quick Tip:** Monitor the news and build on the trends that are capturing attention when researching where and how to pitch, or convince, a reporter to cover the story.

## Targeting a Specific Audience

Determine the target audience. Different stories are effective in different sections of newspapers. Articles on unintentional poisonings written for parents with young children are more likely to be found in the health section. Articles written for gardeners on the proper use of pesticides are more likely to be found in the home and garden section. Story materials can also be submitted for specialized audiences. These can be placed in the newsletters of garden clubs, schools, kennel clubs, and community service organizations. The [fact sheets](#) in this kit can be used to write these articles. Determining the target audience for the story will allow it to be pitched to the reporter/editor who would be most likely to write about it.

**Quick Tip:** Having an audience to target will help shape your media list and pitches – it is possible for a story to target more than one audience.

## Creating a Media List

The next step is to create a media list, a useful tool that will help keep an accurate, up-to-date, organized list of reporters to contact when there is a story. The list should include the name of the outlet, contact names, phone numbers, addresses, fax numbers and e-mail addresses.

Look for stories related to poisonings in daily and weekly newspapers, local television affiliates, radio stations, newswire services, Internet news outlets, magazines, newsletters and business trade publications in the area. Reporters who covered an issue before or demonstrate a concern for a particular population (e.g., parents, seniors) are likely to be interested in another story on that topic.

To get more ideas of who to include on the media list and their contact information and to find reporters' contact information, use the media directories at the local library or bookstore (Bacon's directories, the Yellow Book, Gebbies All-In-One Directory, Lexus Nexus and Google News). Call the outlet to verify their contact information and determine if they are the most appropriate reporters for the story.

**Quick Tip:** Frequently update the media list to stay current with all changes. Remember that media sources (radio, newspapers, and TV) and various clubs and service organizations often have online versions of their publications.

## Materials

Reporters are flooded with story pitches daily, so provide them with clear and concise information to make developing the story an easy decision. The more time reporters can spend developing the story, the more accurate and detailed it will be. Consider developing one or more of the following materials to help garner media coverage:

- **Media advisory** – A one-page invitation to the event that outlines the schedule or specific details, along with a brief description; distributed in advance of an event (a week) to invite media to attend. This tends to follow a “who, what, when, where” format.
- **Press release** – Provides background, describes the activities, and includes a quote by the group’s spokesperson; distributed the day of the event or day when new information or release of information is issued to provide reporters with details. When writing a press release, assume that the reporter will read the release and write the story directly from the release – think about what the story should say and what the headline should be.
- **Op-ed** – Expresses the opinion of the writer about important issues. To write an op-ed, take a side on the topic, support the case, make it relevant and include areas of expertise. The more high-profile the op-ed author is, the more likely it is to be placed. Before drafting, review recent op-ed submissions in the publication to get a sense of what the publication has been running and by whom.
- **Letter to the editor** – A short (one or two paragraphs) and timely response to a news article, such as in follow-up to a relevant story with poisoning statistics. Submit the letter within a few hours after first reading the story – time is of the essence.

When submitting materials for consideration to a reporter, be prepared to also give them the names of local experts (someone from the local poison control center, a doctor, a veterinarian, someone with a personal poisoning experience, etc.), from whom they can get a quote. Give them additional materials, such as fact sheets (from this toolkit or others), sources for additional data and the link to a Web site (see Additional Resources section of this kit).



**Quick Tip:** For op-eds and letters to the editor, most newspapers have specific guidelines that submissions must meet. Be sure to know what those are, including word counts, method of submission, etc.

## Pitching Your Story

Pitching, or introducing a story to a reporter and explaining why it should be covered, is an important part of the process. Be prepared for the pitch. Reporters don't have a lot of time, and they receive a lot of pitches. Make this one stand out by providing the important information quickly.

Most pitches are sent by e-mail. Customize the cover letter appropriately for each person receiving the pitch. Often, reporters may only read the first one or two sentences, so a catchy subject and lead sentence are essential. Reporters may not take the time (or may not be able) to open attachments unless they have specifically requested them, so it is important to paste any materials below the electronic signature, indicating in the text of the e-mail that it is there.

Make a follow-up phone call to reporters and ask them if they had a chance to read the materials. If no one answers, do not leave a voicemail right away, but instead keep trying back at other times. Persistence is key. Call during the middle of the day (between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.), and try not to call late in the day or week (such as Friday afternoon). Many reporters are often on a deadline in the afternoon and are looking for their story ideas earlier in the week. Do not press a reporter who is on a deadline. For radio stations, mention that they can download and play the Poison Help public service announcements available at [www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov).

Work to build relationships with the reporters and use every opportunity to spread the word – post a comment online in response to a recent article and find other ways to get the word out about poison prevention in the community. Be sure to always identify yourself when making a comment on a story – transparency is critical.

**Quick Tip:** Write out your pitch and practice your pitches with colleagues or in the mirror to perfect your strategy. Also, read what the reporter has written in the past and reference a story if applicable in your pitch.

For more information on how to draw media attention to poison prevention during National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) and other events, visit [www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov) to view the NPPW Planner.



# **Room by Room Safety Check**

# Keep your home safe

You can keep yourself and family members safer by being aware of potential hazards and observing these suggestions on ways to poison-proof your home.

Try going through your home down at child's level and looking at everything from their point of view.



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Bathroom

Some items that might be found in the bathroom include:

- Medicines
- Cosmetics
- Nail polisher and removers
- Hair care products
- Toothpaste with fluoride
- Perfume
- Tile cleaner
- Toilet bowl cleaners
- Bathroom deodorizers
- Mouthwash
- Personal hygiene products



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Bedroom

Some items that might be found in the bedroom include:

- Mothballs
- Deodorants
- Cosmetics
- Nail polish and remover
- Hair sprays
- Medicines
- Perfumes
- Mouthwash
- Colognes



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**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Living Room

Some items that might be found in the living room include:

- Medications in coat pockets and purses
- Furniture polish
- Home Fragrant Products
- Pesticides tracked in from the lawn
- Lead-based paint on window sills



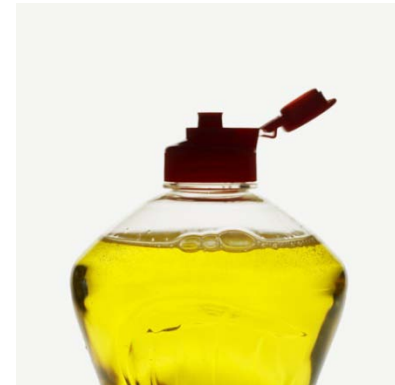
Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Kitchen

**Some items that might be found in the kitchen include:**

- Dishwashing detergent
- Liquid dish soap
- Scouring soap
- Disinfectants
- Window cleaners
- Oven cleaners
- Medicines
- Vitamins
- Ammonia
- Bug spray
- Furniture polish
- Drain cleaners/openers
- Rust removers
- Floor wax
- Metal polish
- Wax remover



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Laundry Room

Some items that might be found in the laundry room include:

- Laundry detergent
- Bleach
- Fabric softener
- Stain removers
- Dye



**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# Garage

Some items that might be found in the garage include:

- Gasoline
- Kerosene
- Car wax
- Car soaps
- Weed killers
- Pesticides
- Paint
- Windshield washer fluid
- Brake fluid
- Antifreeze



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**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Many poisonings of young children happen when the household routine has been interrupted, such as:**

- when a parent is ill
- when a family is moving
- when a family is on a trip
- when there is a guest in the home
- when there is family tension
- when seasonal products are in use

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Medication Tips

- Medicine cabinets are not a good place to store medications.
- Visitors may carry medications in coat pockets and purses.
- Have a child-proof cabinet for medicines that locks.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Personal Care Items

- Some mouthwashes contain enough alcohol to poison small children.
- Mothballs and crystals should be hung in containers.
- If children are present, it is best if personal care items are kept out of their reach.
- Home fragrant products can be attractive to children and may post a hazard.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Cleansers & Detergents

- Some disinfectants and toilet bowl cleaners are dangerously caustic.
- Never store cleaning compounds and foods on the same shelf.
- Never mix cleaning compounds together.
- Keep all substances in their original containers.
- Cap all cleaning compounds while using.
- Clean up spills and leaks immediately and store products properly.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Pesticides

- Use traps, baits or gels instead of pesticides sprays and foggers.
- Get rid of old pesticides that may no longer be registered for residential use.
- Never use illegal pesticides.
- Pesticides can accumulate in carpets when they are tracked into the house.
- Install safety latches on the lower cupboard doors to keep children out.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Keep the nationwide poison  
control center's number  
**(800) 222-1222**  
beside every phone in your  
home and programmed into  
your cell phone.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



# **Fact or Fiction?**



**Bleach and cleaners are the only hazardous household chemicals.**

**FICTION:** There are many types of hazardous household chemicals including items for personal care and home and yard maintenance.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Most poisoning deaths occur in children ages 5 and younger.**

**FICTION:** Child are only 2 percent of the poisoning deaths.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**If you only have a little bit of a household chemical left, it is best to put it into a smaller container.**

**FICTION:** Keep products in original containers with labels so you have active ingredient information in case of a poisoning.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# CAUTION, WARNING, and DANGER all have the different meanings on a package.

**FACT:** Each term has a very specific meaning as determined by EPA.

- **CAUTION:** lowest level of potential harm.
- **WARNING:** can cause serious illness.
- **DANGER:** highest level of potential harm.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**It is okay to combine household cleaners to make a stronger cleaner.**

**FICTION:** Never mix chemicals. Doing so can create a poisonous gas.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**The best way to dispose of hazardous chemicals is to pour them down the drain.**

**FICTION:** Hazardous household chemicals should NEVER be discarded on the ground or poured into storm drains.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# You should not wear contact lenses when using solvents or pesticides.

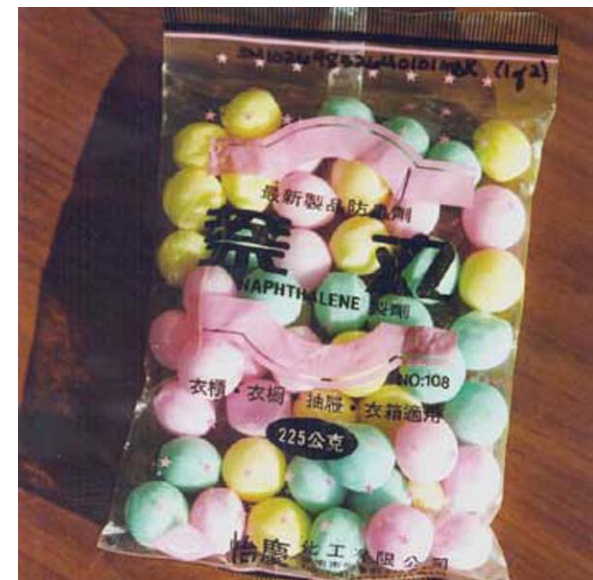
**FACT:** Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when working with solvents and pesticides because they can absorb vapors from the air and hold the chemicals against your eyes.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# All pesticides sold in the United States are regulated and legal.

**FICTION:** There is a rising problem in the sale of illegal pesticides.



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



# The staff of the poison control centers are all poison experts.

**FACT:** Poison centers are staffed by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists. Everyone answering calls is trained in poisoning and most are certified specialists in poison information.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Poison centers are not just for children; they should be used for adults as well.**

**FACT:** 50.7% of poisonings occur in children under age 6, BUT almost 90% of poisoning deaths occur in adults ages 20 and older.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



### Children's Activities: Create a Label

This activity is designed for children ages 10 and older to help them learn about the labels found on hazardous chemicals found in the home. It can be conducted as a contest (see sample [Information for the Students](#)) with winners for the best design or as an activity at a fair.

Many common household products can be poisonous. This includes products such as kitchen, laundry, and bath disinfectants, cockroach sprays and baits, products that kill mold and mildew, flea and tick sprays and powders, pet collars, insect repellants, rat poison, some lawn and garden products, and some swimming pool chemicals.

The labels of the products contain a lot of important information. There is information such as how dangerous it can be, how much to buy, how to use it, how to store, and how to get rid of the empty containers. But all labels don't look alike, and they don't have all the same information.

Have the students use a piece of poster board to make a poster showing how they think a label should look. Have them include all the information they think is important, and place this information in the label. They should think about the size of the words, the colors to use, and what part should be on top. They should consider where all the information should be placed on the container. Should it be in front, on the back, or on the side? They should design the label so people will read **all of it**.



### Create a Label: Information for the Student

**Copy and paste this onto your own letterhead and fill out the appropriate information.**

In conjunction with [Name of School], [Name of Your Organization] is sponsoring a contest for the best hazardous chemical label.

Many common household products can be poisonous. This includes products such as kitchen, laundry, and bath disinfectants, cockroach sprays and baits, products that kill mold and mildew, flea and tick sprays and powders, pet collars, insect repellants, rat poison, some lawn and garden products, and some swimming pool chemicals.

The labels of the products contain a lot of important information. There is information such as how dangerous it can be, how much to buy, how to use it, how to store, and how to get rid of the empty containers. But all labels don't look alike, and they don't have all the same information.

Using a piece of poster board, make a poster showing how you think a label should look. Include all the information you think is important, and place this information in the label. Think about the size of the words, the colors you should use, and what part should be on top. Think about where all the information should be placed on the container. Should it be in front, on the back, or on the side? Design your label so people will read ***all of it***.

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's School:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by: [Name of Your Organization]

Deadline Date: [Day Month, Year]

Prizes: [List Prizes]



## National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) Poster Contest

### Guidelines:

1. The contest is open to two age categories
  - Ages 8 and younger
  - Ages 9 to 13
2. The purpose is to identify a poster that can be used to educate the public about ways to prevent unintentional poisonings in the home.
3. The deadline for entry is June 1<sup>st</sup> each year.
4. There are two themes for the poster contest: ***Poisonings Span a Lifetime*** and ***Children Act Fast, So Do Poisons***. Entries should illustrate a message that communicates that poisonings can happen to people of any age including children, adults and the elderly. Visit <http://www.poisonprevention.org> for poison safety resources, fast facts, and ideas.
5. Entries ***should not*** include any state or regional logos or symbols. Trademark symbols, brand names, or characters (e.g., Snoopy) are also prohibited.
6. There are no size requirements for submission. Entries can be horizontal or vertical.
7. The original art must be submitted. Copies will not be accepted.
8. Each entry must be accompanied by the Artwork Release and Submission Form ([www.poisonprevention.org](http://www.poisonprevention.org)) and all information must be legibly filled out.
9. All poster entries should be mailed to:
10. American Association of Poison Control Centers – Poster Contest
11. 515 King Street, Suite 510, Alexandria, VA 22314
12. By signing the Artwork Release and Submission Form, parent/guardian gives permission to the Council to adapt, reproduce and distribute the posters nationally.
13. The following information will be added to the winning poster: Poison Hotline toll free number, Poison Prevention Week date, artist name and age, submitting organization, Poison Prevention Week Council mailing address and website.
14. The posters will be judged by members of the National Poison Prevention Week Council. The artist of the winning poster will be notified by July 1<sup>st</sup> each year.



### Messages for Children

**These are the messages to be conveyed. They will need to be tailored for the grade level.**

- Poisons can make people sick, or even kill them.
- Poisons can be things you eat, breathe, touch, or get in your eyes.
- If you are not sure what something is, do not eat or drink it.
- Poisons may be things your parents use every day.
- Do not play with the liquids that your parents use when working on the car.
- Do not play with the liquids that your parents use to clean the house.
- Help keep bugs out of the house by putting food away and cleaning up spills.
- If you think you or someone else ate or drank something that is poison, tell a grown up right away.
- Always wash your hands before eating.
- Always wash your hands after playing outside.

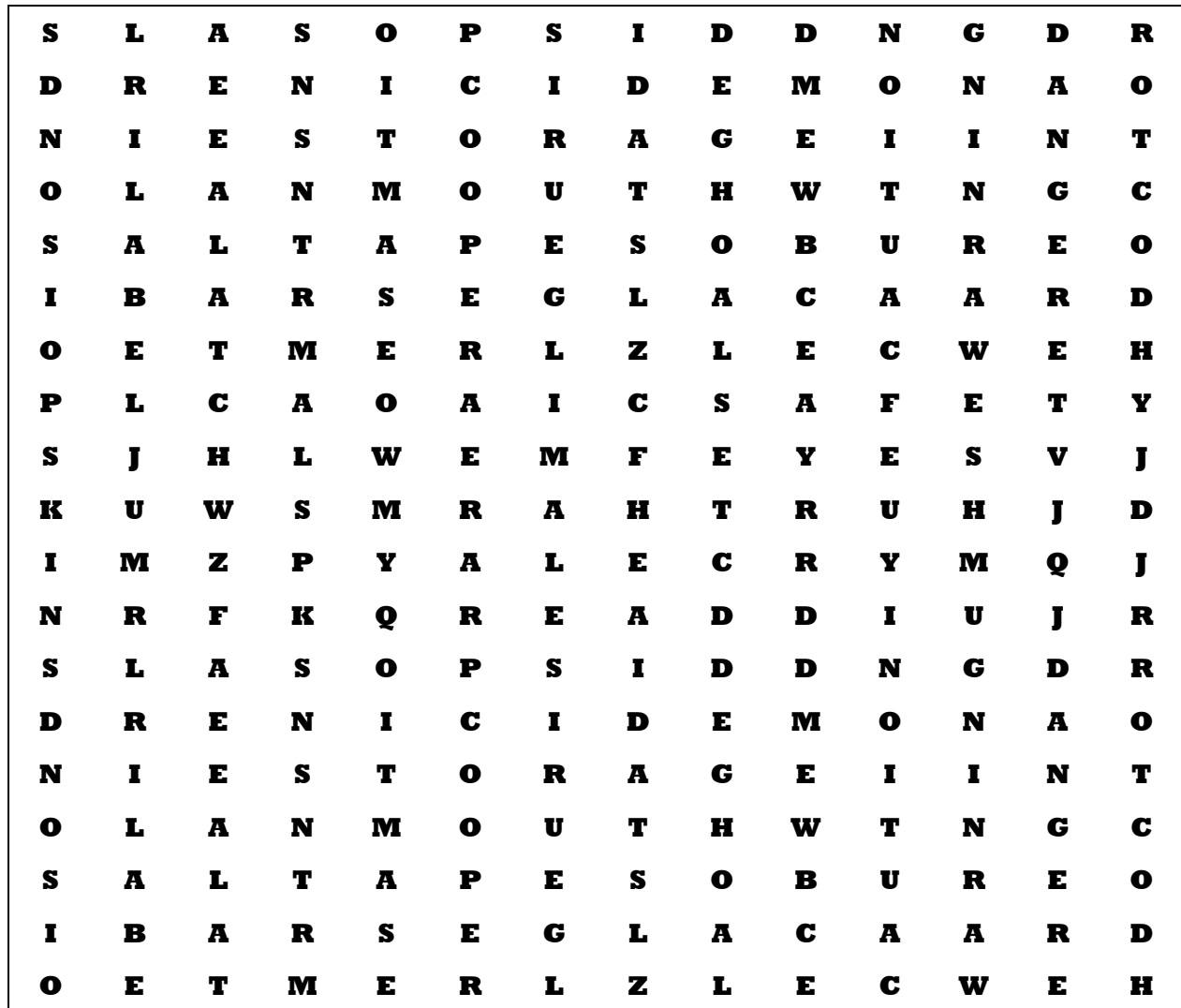
# Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



## Community Hazardous Chemicals Safety

### Word Search



CAUTION  
CLEANERS  
DANGER  
DISPOSAL  
DOCTOR

EYES  
FIRST AID  
HARM  
HURT  
LABEL

LATCH  
MEDICINE  
MOUTH  
POISON  
READ

SAFETY  
SKIN  
STORAGE  
SWALLOW  
WARNING

Never eat or drink anything if you are not sure what it is.  
Always ask a grown up.

# Poison Prevention Educator Kit



## Community Hazardous Chemicals Safety

### Cockroach Dinner

To keep from having roaches in your home – don't feed them! Put



*Food, water, and Shelter*





### Sample Letter to School

**Copy and paste this letter onto your own letterhead and fill out the appropriate information.**

[Date]

[School name]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip]

Dear Principal [Name]:

We would like to work with students in [grade] by giving them simple poison prevention messages, helping them complete some handouts on poison prevention, holding a poison prevention poster contest, or providing suggestions for a science fair project.

In the 2007 poison centers received 537,945 calls regarding exposures to cosmetics and personal care products, household cleaning products, and pesticides. The majority of them were children. According to our local poison control center, there were [Get Statistics from Local Poison Control Center] poisonings in [Location] alone in [Year].

Many common household products are hazardous chemicals, including pesticides, household cleaners, personal care products, lighter fluids, cosmetics, and automotive fluids. Although these products can be helpful, they can be dangerous if used carelessly or if they are not stored properly.

We would like to work with students in [grade] by giving them simple poisoning prevention messages, helping them complete some handouts on hazardous household chemicals, having them create a label, and helping them with a poster contest.

I will call you next week to see if we can join together in addressing this serious public health problem affecting our children.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title]



### Sample PTA Flyer

**To:** The Parents of Children at [Name of School]

**Who:** [Name of Your Organization]

**What:** Hazardous Household Chemicals Safety

**Where:** [Name of School]

**When:** [Date & Time of Meeting]

**Why:** In the 2007 poison centers received 537,945 calls regarding exposures to cosmetics and personal care products, household cleaning products, and pesticides. The overwhelming majority of them were children.

[Name of your organization] is interested in the well-being of the citizens in our community and will be giving a hazardous household chemicals safety presentation to help keep our children safe and healthy.

For more information, please contact us at:

[Name]  
[Organization]  
[Address]  
[City, State, Zip]  
[Telephone]  
[Email]  
[Web Site]

Copy and paste this flyer onto your own letterhead and fill out the appropriate information.



## Interactive Exhibit Ideas

**DO NOT walk away from a display if you have poisons on the table!**

Many poison prevention educators have developed displays and games that they use to educate the public on various aspects of poison prevention. Call the nationwide toll-free poison prevention number – 800-222-1222 – to talk with your local poison educator about their displays and games. Many of the local poison control centers have educational materials available on their website. Go the website for the American Association of Poison Control Centers, <http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/>, and click on the “Find Local Poison Center” to find information about your local poison control center.

Below are some suggestions for activities and displays that you can make and use.

### Create a Label

This activity is designed to help children learn about the labels on hazardous chemicals found in the home. Start by going over the information on the sheet and then have the children design a label that covers the material. You will need to supply poster boards, crayons, paints, and other art supplies.

### Room by Room Safety Flip Chart

Print out the questions and answers for the [Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room Flip Chart](#) on cover stock (heavy paper) with each question and answer on a separate piece of paper. Laminate the sheets and punch three holes in top of the sheets. Place the sheets in a ½” or 1” three ring binder. This will hold the pages together, but allow the pages to be flipped. To get the display to stand on the table, fold the notebook inside out so the rings are facing upward. Put the first part of the Velcro dots in the two outside corners of both the front and back covers of the binders. Put the second part of the Velcro dots on both ends of two pieces of ribbons that are about 5” to 6” long. Then join the ribbons to the Velcro dots that are in the corners. This will form a tent that will allow the questions and answers to be read then flipped over.

## True or False Flipchart

Print out the questions and answers for the [True or False Flipchart](#) on cover stock (heavy paper) with each question and answer on a separate piece of paper. Laminate the sheets and punch three holes in the top of the sheets. Place the sheets in a ½" or 1" three ring binder. This will hold the pages together, but allow the pages to be flipped. To get the display to stand on the table, fold the notebook inside out so the rings are facing upward. Put the first part of the Velcro dots in the two outside corners of both the front and back covers of the binders. Put the second part of the Velcro dots on both ends of two pieces of ribbons that are about 5" to 6" long. Then join the ribbons to the Velcro dots that are in the corners. This will form a tent that will allow the questions and answers to be read then flipped over.



## Hazardous Chemicals Room by Room

In each room, try to identify what hazardous chemicals might be present.  
Flip the card to check your answer.

**Good Luck!**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Bathroom



Hint: At least  
11 items.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Bathroom

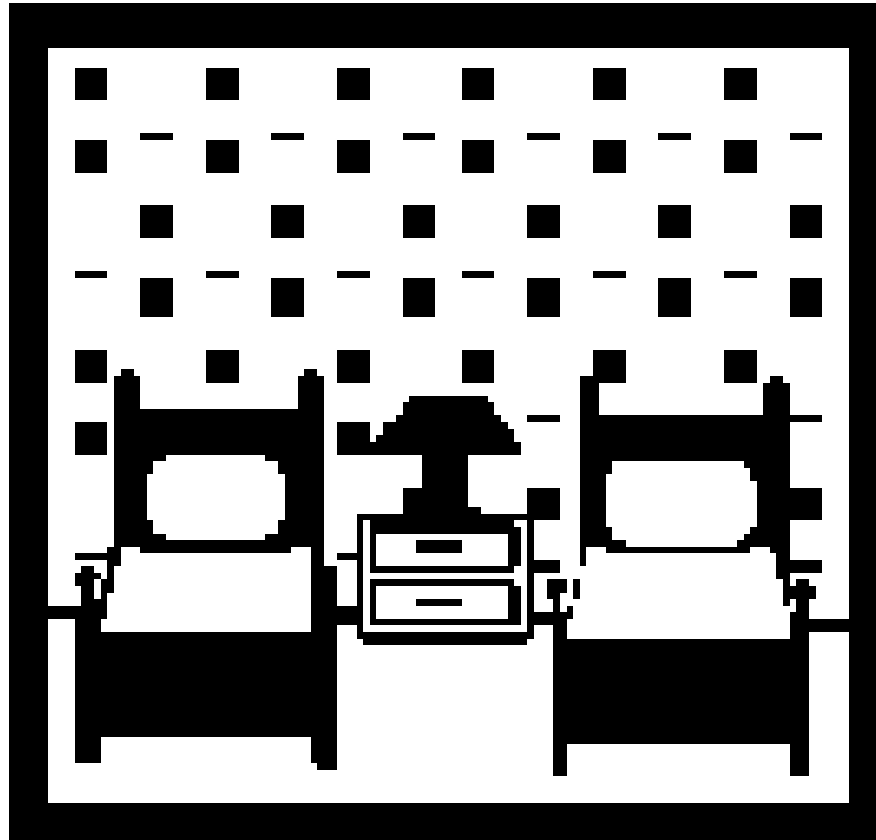
- Medicines
- Cosmetics
- Nail polisher and removers
- Hair care products
- Toothpaste with fluoride
- Perfume
- Tile cleaner
- Toilet bowl cleaners
- Bathroom deodorizers
- Mouthwash
- Personal hygiene products

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# Bedroom

- Hint: At least 9 items.



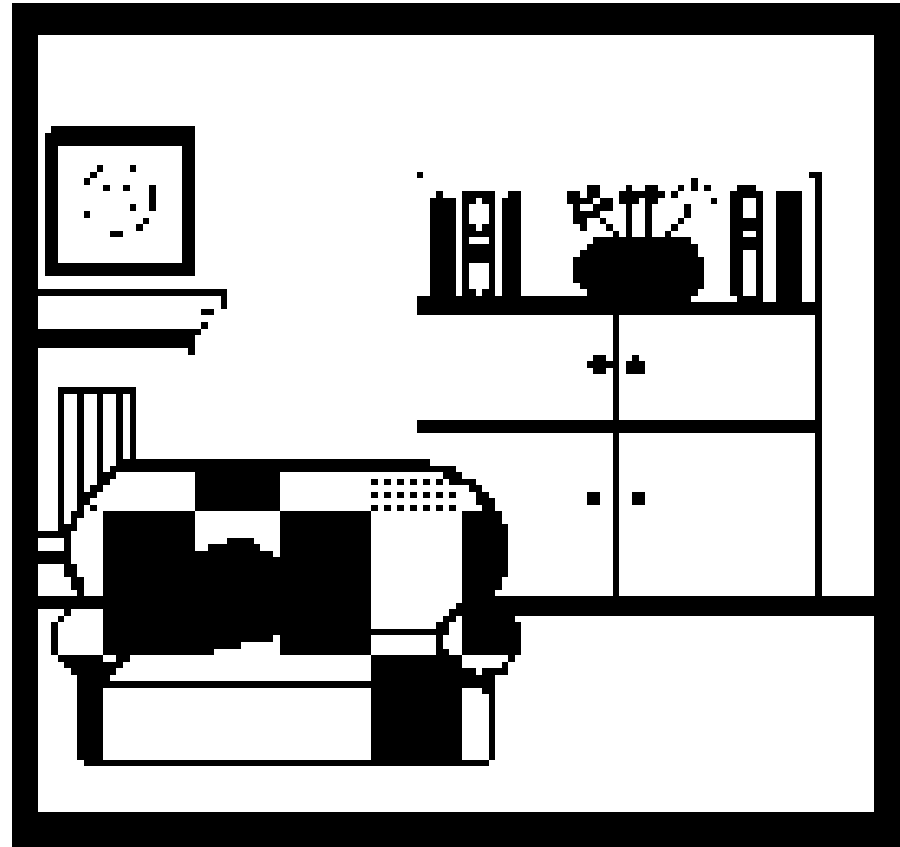
Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Bedroom

- Mothballs
- Cosmetics
- Hair sprays
- Perfumes
- Colognes
- Deodorants
- Nail polish and remover
- Medicines
- Carbon monoxide

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Living Room



- Hint: At least 7 items.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

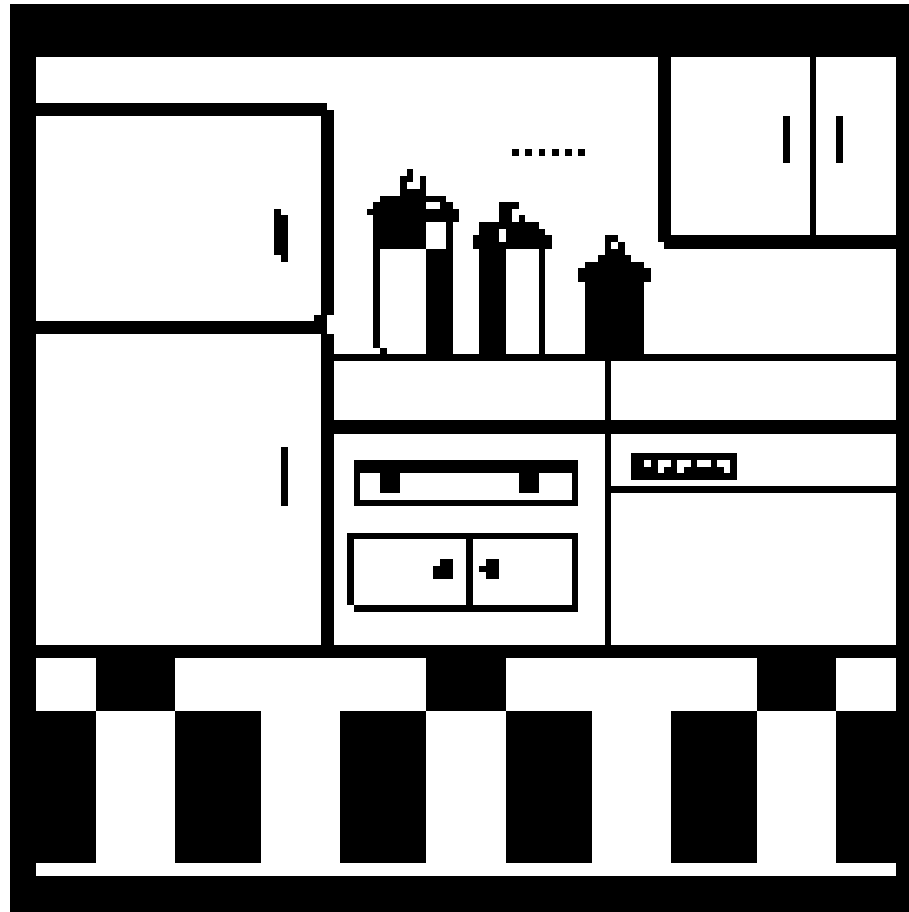
# Living Room

- Medications in coat pockets and purses
- Furniture polish
- Home Fragrant Products
- Workplace chemicals and pesticides tracked in from the outside
- Lead-based paint on window sills
- Toxic plants

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Kitchen

- Hint: At least 16 items.



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Kitchen

- Dishwashing detergent
- Liquid dish soap
- Scouring soap
- Disinfectants
- Window cleaners
- Oven cleaners
- Medicines
- Vitamins
- Furniture polisher
- Drain cleaners/ openers
- Ammonia
- Bug spray
- Rust removers
- Floor wax
- Metal polish
- Wax remover

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Laundry Room



- Hint: At least 5 items.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Laundry Room

- Laundry detergent
- Bleach
- Fabric softener
- Stain removers
- Dye

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# Garage



- Hint: At least 11 items.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Garage

- Gasoline
- Kerosene
- Car wax
- Car soaps
- Weed killers
- Pesticides
- Paint
- Windshield washer fluid
- Brake fluid
- Antifreeze
- Carbon monoxide

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



## True or False?

Answer True or False to each question  
and then flip the card to check your answer.

**Good Luck!**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**A hazardous substance is any chemical that may be harmful if inhaled, swallowed, or comes in contact with the eyes or skin.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True:

They include items for personal care, home and yard maintenance. Misuse can cause illness, injury, and even death.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Pesticides are the only hazardous chemicals in the home.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## False:

Some of the most common household products can be very hazardous, including:

- cleaning substances
- personal care products
- garden supplies
- automotive products
- hobby materials
- fuels
- paints
- pool products

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**Most poisoning deaths occur in  
children ages 6 and younger.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:**

Children are only 2 percent of the poisoning deaths.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**If you only have a little bit of a household chemical left, it is best to put it into a smaller container.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## **False:**

Keep products in original containers so it is not confused with another product.  
Also you may need the label in case of a poisoning.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**CAUTION, WARNING, and DANGER**  
all have the different meanings on a  
package.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

## True:

Each term has a very specific meaning as determined by EPA.

- **CAUTION:** lowest level of potential harm.
- **WARNING:** can cause serious illness.
- **DANGER:** highest level of potential harm.

**It is okay to combine household  
cleaners to make a stronger cleaner.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:**

Never mix chemicals. Doing so can create a poisonous gas.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**The best way to dispose of hazardous chemicals is to pour them down the drain, rinse out the bottle, and throw it in the trash.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## **False:**

Hazardous household chemicals should NEVER be discarded on the ground or poured into storm drains. These products should be saved and taken to Household Hazardous Waste collections.

**You should not wear contact lenses  
when using solvents or pesticides.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True:

Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when working with solvents and pesticides because they can absorb vapors from the air and hold the chemical against your eyes.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**All pesticides sold in the United States are regulated and legal.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## **False:**

There is a rising problem in the sale of illegal pesticides. Only buy pesticides when the label says registered with the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Legal pesticides are only safe if  
used as directed.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True:**

All safety statements are linked to correct usage.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**The staff of the poison control  
centers are all poison experts.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True:

Poison centers are staffed by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and toxicologists. Everyone answering calls is trained in poisoning and most are certified specialists in poison information.

Poison centers are not just for children; they should be used for adults as well.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## True:

50.7% of poisonings occur in children under age 6, BUT almost 90% of poisoning deaths occur in adults ages 20 and older.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



### Common Hazardous Household Chemicals

Many products used regularly in the home are not easily recognized as hazardous, especially since some are used on our bodies. However, if misused they can be dangerous.

Here is a list of some of the more common hazardous household chemicals.

- **Health and beauty products** (hairspray, hair remover, fingernail polish, fingernail polish remover, hair coloring products, medications, lice shampoo, etc.).
- **Automotive fluids** (oil, anti-freeze, fuel, brake fluid, windshield washer fluid, transmission fluid, car wash and polish, tar and bug remover etc.)
- **Household cleaners** (bleach, ammonia, dish soap, disinfectants, carpet and upholstery cleaner, carpet freshener, air freshener, window cleaner, furniture polish, oven cleaner, toilet bowl cleaners, mold and mildew remover).
- **Laundry products** (bleach, laundry detergent, fabric softener, etc)
- **Lawn and garden products** (fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, gasoline, oil, etc.)
- **Barbecue products** (propane, charcoal briquettes, lighter fluid, etc.)
- **Home maintenance** (paint, varnish, stains, oils, mouse/rat poison, drain cleaner)
- **Pet maintenance** (flea collar or powder, tick powder, pet shampoo)

This [fact sheet](#) is available as a handout.



## Preventing Hazardous Chemical Poisonings

**Poisonings can be prevented, but if one occurs, call the nationwide toll-free number for poison centers, 1-800-222-1222, immediately.**

Take the following steps to prevent poisonings.

### When buying a potentially hazardous chemical:

- Look for safer alternatives to hazardous products.
- Buy the least hazardous product.
- Buy only as much as you need to do the job at hand.
- Beware that "nontoxic" products can still contain hazardous ingredients.
- Read the entire label carefully, especially for additional health warnings.
- Buy hazardous products in child-resistant packaging.
- Avoid aerosol products because the droplets can be deeply inhaled into the lungs and quickly absorbed into the bloodstream.

### When using a potentially hazardous chemical:

- Read all labels before using hazardous products, paying careful attention to proper use instructions and dangers.
- Twice as much does not mean improved results.
- Do not mix chemicals because it can cause explosive or poisonous chemical reactions.
- If pregnant, avoid toxic chemical exposure. Many toxic products have not been tested for their effects on unborn children.
- During use, keep hazardous products out of the reach of small children. Do not leave products unattended or unsealed.
- Avoid wearing soft contact lenses when working with solvents and pesticides because they can absorb vapors from the air and hold the chemical against your eyes.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while using hazardous products. Traces of hazardous chemicals can be carried from hand to mouth. Smoking can start a fire if the product is flammable.
- Use products in well-ventilated areas to avoid inhaling fumes.
- Use protective gloves, goggles and respirators that are appropriate to the task if the product presents hazards to skin, eyes or lungs.
- Clean up after using hazardous products. Carefully seal products and properly refasten all caps.

### **When storing a potentially hazardous chemical:**

- Keep products out of the reach of children and animals. Store all hazardous products away from food items in locked cabinets or in cabinets with childproof latches.
- Make sure lids and caps are tightly sealed and childproof.
- Make certain all products are clearly labeled before storing them.
- Leave products in their original containers with the contents clearly identified on the labels. Never put hazardous products in food or beverage containers.
- Keep products away from sources of heat, spark, flame or ignition such as pilot lights, switches and motors. This is especially important with flammable products and aerosol cans.
- Store products containing volatile chemicals, or those that warn of vapors or fumes, in a well-ventilated area.
- Never store rags contaminated with flammable solvents because they can spontaneously start on fire. Follow the directions on the product label regarding the disposal of solvent-covered rags. If there are no directions, place the rags in an airtight, metal container and store the container outside your house away from other structures until it can be picked up with the trash.
- Store gasoline and liquid propane gas tanks only in safety-approved containers in a well-ventilated area away from all sources of heat, flame, or spark.
- Keep a working ABC-rated, or Multi-Purpose Dry Chemical, fire extinguisher in your home.
- Keep containers dry to prevent corrosion.

### **Steps for cleaning up spills of potentially hazardous chemicals:**

1. Remove children and pets from the area where the spill occurred.
2. Ventilate the area.
3. Do not attempt to use cleaning products to clean up the spill.
4. At a minimum, wear the appropriate protective gloves for the product. Other safety equipment may be required for volatile solvents, pesticides or corrosive products.
5. Contain the spill to a small area by soaking it up with a non-flammable absorbent material, such as clay-based kitty litter.
6. Put the contaminated material into a non-corroding container. A plastic bucket with a tight-fitting lid is recommended.
7. Seal the container and label it with the product name, approximate amount of product, absorbent material used, date, and the word DANGER or POISON.
8. Contact local solid waste authorities for information on how to dispose of the contaminated material or save for a household hazardous waste collection (call [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com) for more information).
9. After the spill has been absorbed, thoroughly rinse the area several times with water and rags. Then wash the area carefully to remove remaining traces of the product.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a [handout](#).**



### Understanding the Terms

**It is important to read a chemical product's label, understanding its proper use and proper storage.**

The label of a product will indicate the level of toxicity and precautions that should be taken when used. All the terms do not have the same meaning.

**CAUTION** indicates the lowest level of potential harm. It means that the product is not likely to produce permanent damage as a result of exposure, if appropriate first aid is given. The eye or skin could become inflamed, or adverse effects, such as dizziness or stomach upset, could occur if the product is swallowed or inhaled.

**WARNING** indicates a higher level of potential harm than CAUTION, meaning that you could become seriously ill or harmed. It also is used to identify products that can easily catch on fire. These products are required by law to be in child-resistant packaging.

**DANGER** indicates the highest level of potential harm. Unintentional exposure of the eye or skin of the product could produce tissue damage. Swallowing the product could produce damage to the mouth, throat, and stomach or even death. This word is also used if the material could explode if exposed to an open flame. These products are required by law to be in child-resistant packaging. You may also find a skull-and-crossbones symbol along with words "DANGER-POISON" on certain pesticide products. This means the product can harm the whole body.

**POISON** indicates that it can injure or kill if absorbed through the skin, ingested or inhaled.



**TOXIC** means it can cause injury or death if swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin.

**IRRITANT** indicates it causes soreness or swelling of skin, eyes, mucous membranes, or respiratory system.

**FLAMMABLE** means it easily catches on fire and tends to burn rapidly.

**FLAMMABLE LIQUID** means it catches on fire below 140°F (100°F for US DOT purposes).

**COMBUSTIBLE LIQUID** indicates it catches on fire from 140°F (100°F for US DOT purposes) to 200°F.

**CORROSIVE** indicates a chemical or its vapors that can cause a material or living tissue to be destroyed.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a handout.**





### Safer Alternatives

Before buying or using a potentially hazardous household chemical, check to see if there is a safer alternative. This could also be less expensive and better for the environment.

For this:	Try this:
Air freshener	Simmer cinnamon and cloves; leave opened box of baking soda in room; or set out a dish of vinegar.
All purpose cleaner	Dissolve 4 tablespoons baking soda in 1 quart warm water for a cleaning solution or use baking soda sprinkled on a damp sponge.
Aluminum spot remover	To remove stains and discoloration from aluminum cookware, fill cookware with hot water, add 2 tablespoons cream of tartar to each quart of water, bring solution to a boil and simmer ten minutes, and wash as usual and dry.
Ants	Sprinkle red chili powder or cream of tartar at point of entry. Boric acid will also kill ants when spread liberally around the points of entry. Boric acid has some toxicity and should not be applied to areas where small children and animals are likely to contact it.
Bleach	Substitute Borax.
Blood stains	Rinse or sponge blood stains immediately with club soda, repeat as necessary, and wash as usual.
Brass polish	Clean and polish unlacquered brass with a soft cloth dampened with Worcestershire sauce.
Car battery corrosion	Make a paste of baking soda and water, apply to corrosion, and rinse off.
Chocolate stains	Rinse or sponge chocolate stains immediately with club soda, repeat as necessary, and wash as usual.
Chrome polish	Apply apple cider vinegar and then polish with baby oil
Cleaners (general household)	Clean with a mixture of 1/2 cup ammonia, 1/3 cup vinegar, and 1/4 cup baking soda in one gallon of warm water.
Coffee stains	Rub coffee stains gently with moist salt.
Coffee pot stain	To remove stains in coffee, soak it in vinegar.
Copper cleaner	Clean copper by rubbing gently with lemon juice and salt.

<b>For this:</b>	<b>Try this:</b>
<b>Decal remover</b>	To remove a decal, soak it in white vinegar.
<b>Drain cleaner</b>	Put 1/2 cup baking soda, then 1/2 cup white vinegar down your drain, cover the drain, let set for a few minutes, and then pour a kettle of boiling water down the drain to flush it.
<b>Fertilizer</b>	Use compost and vermin-compost instead of fertilizers.
<b>Fiberglass stain remover</b>	To remove stains from fiberglass, rub it with baking soda paste.
<b>Flea &amp; tick repellent</b>	To repel ticks and fleas, scatter pine needles, fennel, rye or rosemary on pet's bed.
<b>Floor cleaner</b>	Clean with a mixture of 1 cup vinegar mixed with 2 gallons of water.
<b>Furniture polish</b>	To polish furniture, mix 2 parts olive oil with 1 part lemon juice, apply to the furniture, and polish with a soft cloth.
<b>Garbage disposal deodorizers</b>	Grind citrus rind or ice cubes to remove odors from garbage disposal.
<b>Gold &amp; Silver polish</b>	To clean tarnish off gold and silver (not silver plate), apply toothpaste with a soft toothbrush or cloth, rinse with clean warm water, and polish dry.
<b>Grease fire</b>	To put out a grease fire, douse with baking soda.
<b>Grease removal</b>	Use Borax on damp cloth to remove grease.
<b>Hand cleaner for paint/grease</b>	To remove paint or grease from hands, rub with baby oil.
<b>Ink spot remover</b>	To remove an ink spot, put cream of tartar on the stain, squeeze a few drops of lemon juice over it, rub it in for a minute, brush off the powder, and sponge with warm water or launder.
<b>Insects on plants</b>	Apply soapy water on leaves and then rinse.
<b>Lime and mineral deposit remover</b>	<p>Hard lime deposits around faucets can be softened for easy removal by covering the deposits with vinegar-soaked rags or paper towels. Leave rags or paper towels on for about 1 hour before cleaning.</p> <p>To remove deposits that may be clogging metal shower heads, combine 1/2 cup white vinegar with 1 quart water, completely submerge the shower head and boil for 15 minutes. If you have a plastic shower head, combine 1 pint white vinegar with 1 pint hot water, completely submerge the shower head, and soak for about 1 hour.</p>
<b>Mildew remover</b>	Clean mildew with a mixture of equal parts of vinegar and salt.
<b>Mosquito repellent</b>	Burn citronella candles to keep mosquitoes away.

<b>For this:</b>	<b>Try this:</b>
<b>Moth repellent</b>	Use cedar chips or dried lavender enclosed in cotton sachets in closets or storage trunks to keep moths out.
<b>Nematode (parasitic worm) repellent</b>	Plant marigolds in garden to repel nematodes.
<b>Oil stain remover</b>	To remove oil stains, rub white chalk into stain before laundering.
<b>Oven cleaner</b>	Clean ovens with mixture of 2 tablespoons liquid soap, 2 teaspoons borax, and warm water
<b>Paint brush softener</b>	Soften paint brushes by soaking them in hot vinegar.
<b>Perspiration spot remover</b>	Remove perspiration spots by rubbing with baking soda.
<b>Refrigerator deodorizer</b>	An open box of baking soda will get rid of odors in the refrigerator.
<b>Roach repellent</b>	Sprinkle entry points with chopped bay leaves and cucumber skins. Boric acid will also kill ants when spread liberally around the points of entry. Boric acid has some toxicity and should not be applied to areas where small children and animals are likely to contact it.
<b>Rust removal (clothing)</b>	Rub rust spot with a mixture of lemon juice and salt and then place in sunlight.
<b>Rust removal (bolt/nut)</b>	Soak bolts or nuts in carbonated beverage to remove rust.
<b>Slug and snail repellent</b>	Plant onions and marigolds in garden to repel slugs and snails.
<b>Stainless steel polish</b>	Polish stainless steel by rubbing with mineral oil.
<b>Toilet bowl cleaner</b>	Clean toilet bowl by rubbing with a paste of borax and lemon juice.
<b>Tub and tile cleaner</b>	Clean tub and tile by rubbing with a mixture of 1/4 cup baking soda, 1/2 cup white vinegar, and warm water
<b>Upholstery spot removal</b>	Remove spots on upholstery by rubbing with club soda.
<b>Wine stain removal</b>	Remove wine stains by rubbing with salt.

<b>For this:</b>	<b>Try this:</b>
<b>Window cleaner</b>	Clean windows with a mixture of 1/2 cup of vinegar in 1 gallon of warm water.
<b>Wood polish</b>	Polish interior unvarnished wood by rubbing with a mixture of 3 parts olive oil and 1 part white vinegar.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a handout.**



## Disposal of Hazardous Products

**Leftover products can poison someone; do not purchase more than is needed for the job.**

Households purchase almost 400 potentially hazardous products in a year. These products tend to be stockpiled in garages, under sinks, in cabinets, and sheds. These forgotten products can become a poison risk. Only buy enough of the product for the job needed.

Products should NEVER be discarded on the ground or poured into storm drains. Many products shouldn't even be disposed of in the trash or down the toilet. These products should be saved and taken to Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collections.

Disposal instructions and reuse and recycling capabilities vary from municipality to municipality. Limiting the amount of hazardous waste materials or removing them from the solid waste stream allows municipalities to reduce the potential for unintentional exposures to sanitation workers, materials recovery facility workers, landfill workers, and the environment. For more information on disposal of hazardous products where you live, call Earth 911 at 800-CLEANUP, or visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org), and type in "hazardous waste" and your zip code to find the nearest disposal site.

General guidance for disposal:

### Products in pressurized containers

- Do not puncture or incinerate!
- **If empty:** Place in trash or offer for recycling if available.
- **If partly filled:** Call the local solid waste agency for disposal instructions.

### Products in non-pressurized containers

This includes liquids and solids (tablets, dusts, gels, pet products, etc.) in all other types of product containers (e.g., bags, boxes, bottles, cans, bait stations, squeeze tubes, etc.)



- **If empty:** Do not reuse this container. Place in trash or offer for recycling if available.
- **If partly filled:** Call your local solid waste agency for disposal instructions. Never place unused product down any indoor or outdoor drain.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a handout.**



## Background

**More than 25,000 Americans die from an unintentional drug overdose. These deaths were from a poisonous substance or a combination of substances that were designed to help heal or provide relief from pain, not to kill.**

The trend in poisonings has changed significantly during the past decades. While children's poisoning deaths have declined, adult poisoning deaths are greatly increasing. Adult poison deaths most frequently involve drugs (prescription, over-the-counter), illegal drugs, and alcohol. Drug overdoses are the second leading cause of injury-related deaths. In some states, overdose-related death, top motor vehicle fatalities. This increase is for men and women ages 20-64.

This rise in unintentional poisonings has tremendous impact on all Americans in their homes and communities. This affects our economy in lost wages and poor productivity, as well as healthcare costs. But most importantly, this affects our family and friends.

The classification of drugs that is playing the biggest role in this alarming trend is opioid analgesics, or painkillers. Never before in the history of this country have so many painkillers been prescribed to so many people. And access to these potent drugs is not only coming from medical prescribers; when used for non-medical purposes, friends or relatives were the source of these drugs in more than 69% of cases.

But this trend is about Americans who did not realize the significant risks they were taking. These were preventable deaths. They may have taken more than the recommended dosage of a prescribed medication for faster results. Or, they may have unknowingly taken a lethal dose of a legal or illegal drug to get high or combined with alcohol. And to compound the issue, about three fourths of all recreational users of pain relievers are employed. This puts not only the user at risk, but their employer, their co-workers, their community, and their families. These men and women may have taken an over-the-counter



medicine without realizing the potential interactions with other prescription medications.

These medication safety messages can be relayed to the public in a number of ways, including presentations for civic organizations, the PTA, and teachers, and safety and health fairs. To get started, review the [Strategies for Implementing the Kit](#).





## Strategies for Implementing the Kit

**More than 25,000 Americans die from unintentional drug overdoses annually. These deaths are from a poisonous substance or a combination of substances that were designed to help heal or provide relief from pain, not to kill.**

These exposures and deaths can be reduced by helping members of the community understand the risks of medication, how to recognize the symptoms of overdosing, and how to prevent overdosing. This information can be presented in a number of ways and highlighted at different times. Medication awareness should be promoted year-round; however, there are certain times when the number of unintentional medication-related poisonings escalates.

Medication safety messages can be highlighted around:

- **Spring:** Medication consumption often rises as people battle seasonal allergies; spring is a popular time to clean out your medicine cabinet. Be sure to keep all medications secured during the cleaning process.
- **National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW):** NPPW is an opportunity during the third week of March to amplify poison prevention, specifically unintentional drug overdosing, in a nationwide effort and through local activities.
- **Fall/Winter:** This is a crucial time to emphasize medication safety as medicine consumption rises during cold and flu season.

Poison prevention messages can underscore the importance of medication safety, especially during specific times of the year. Below are examples of potential outreach opportunities you can consider during these times. Click on the link for more details on each one.

### [Presentations to Civic Organizations](#)

Most communities have a number of civic organizations such as Elk Lodges, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, and Chamber of Commerce. The members of these organizations are usually the town leaders and they are interested in promoting the public good. If they understand the risks and prevention of overdosing, they can help to disseminate the information.

## [Presentations at Schools – PTA and Teachers](#)

Most schools have Parent Teacher Association meetings on a monthly basis. The meeting held in March, which includes National Poison Prevention Week, would be a good opportunity to present information on medication safety. There might also be an opportunity to present the information to teachers during one of their in-service days.

## [Activities in the Classroom](#)

Depending on the age of the students, there are a number of different activities that can be conducted in the classroom. Every year the National Poison Prevention Week Council holds a poster contest. There are two age categories: 8 and younger, and 9 to 13. For older students, consider sponsoring a science fair project on poison prevention. There are also displays that help to convey medication safety information to children.

## [Safety or Health Fairs](#)

Another effective way to disseminate poison prevention messages to the public is through safety and health fairs. Many communities have safety fairs: a large company might have one for its employees; the hospital might sponsor one; there are state and county fairs; the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or 4-H Club might hold one, sometimes real estate offices hold them, etc. The PowerPoint presentation or the Fact or Fiction Quiz be play continuously to draw people to the booth; attendees can test themselves with the flipchart, and receive handouts to take home to their families.

## **[Presentations to Specialized Groups](#)**

### **Doctors' Offices and Clinics**

Visit the local emergency clinics, health clinics, and doctors' offices to request permission to have a poison prevention display in their waiting room. This display can include posters, brochures, the Poison Help Stickers, and various other materials that can be obtained by calling the poison control center number, 1-800-222-1222, and asking for the poison educator.

### **Local Retailers**

Sometimes local retailers will allow temporary displays in their stores, especially if some of the products they sell are potentially poisonous. Try contacting grocery stores and supermarkets (especially those with in-house pharmacies) and pharmacies. Some of the activities can include setting up a table to distribute

brochures and fact sheets; placing fact sheets or brochure in with every purchase; displaying posters; setting up a window display; running a PowerPoint presentation.

### [Working with the Media](#)

You can use the media to deliver your message or to help promote your poison prevention event.



## **Presentations to Civic Organizations**

**Objective:** Raise the public's awareness about the risks of overdosing and safe medication practices.

**Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes during one their regularly scheduled meetings

**Setting:** Meeting room

**Equipment:** Laptop computer, LCD projector, screen or blank wall

**Research:** Match poison prevention information with the needs of the organization you are interested in approaching.

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information, practice with PowerPoints, choose which materials to hand out, and read them prior to presentation.

**Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentations: Myths & Realities](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: True or False](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: Preventing & Responding to Overdoses](#)  
[Handout: Medication Worksheet](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)

**Marketing:** Make announcements at several of the organization's meetings ahead of time. Place notices in their newsletter and through their listservs. Be sure to give them your information in plenty of time for them to notify their members.



## **Presentations to Teachers or PTA**

- Objective:** Raise the public's awareness about the risks of overdosing and safe medication practices.
- Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes
- Setting:** Cafeteria or classroom
- Equipment:** Laptop computer, LCD projector, screen or blank wall
- Research:** Find out their interests. Ask what the PTA is working on. Do the parents have specific concerns? Can the teachers incorporate the material into their lesson plans?
- Preparation:** Introduce yourself, using the [Sample Letter to the School](#). Read [Background](#) information, practice with PowerPoints, choose which materials to hand out, and read them prior to presentation.
- Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentations: Myths & Realities](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: True or False](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: Preventing & Responding to Overdoses](#)  
[Handout: Medication Worksheet](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)
- Marketing:** Make announcements at several of the PTA's meetings ahead of time, make announcements in the PTA newsletter, send [flyers](#) home with the students, place notices in the teachers' mailbox. Be sure to give them your information in plenty of time for them to notify their members.



### Classroom Activities

**Objective:** To help children understand medication safety and how to prevent poisoning.

**Time Needed:** Half hour to 45 minutes

**Setting:** Classroom

**Equipment:** None

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information and make sure the [messages](#) conveyed to the children are simple and easy to understand. Have handouts for the children to take home to their family. Contact the Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222 for items to give to the children (magnets, stickers, etc.) You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for some different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

**Materials:** [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#)  
[Poster Contest Information](#) (Ages 5 and younger; 9 to 13)  
[Science Fair Project Information for Students](#) (Ages 13 and older)  
[Handout: Medication Worksheet](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)

**Marketing:** You can supply the poster contest information and the science fair project information with a letter to the school requesting permission to talk to the children in the classroom.



## Safety or Health Fair

**Objective:** Raise the public's awareness about the risks of overdosing and safe medication practices.

**Time Needed:** Half day to whole day

**Setting:** Community center, school, library, fairgrounds or other large site open to the public

**Equipment:** Laptop computer

**Preparation:** Read [Background](#) information and become familiar with the material in the handouts and call poison control center (1-800-222-1222) to receive additional materials and items (magnets, stickers, etc.) to hand out.

You will need to prepare some of the displays ahead of time. Instructions for some different types of displays are included in the [Interactive Exhibit Ideas](#).

**Materials:** [PowerPoint Presentations: Myths & Realities](#)  
[PowerPoint Presentation: True or False](#)  
[Flip Chart: True or False](#)  
[Handout: Medication Worksheet](#)  
[Brochures: Poison Control Centers \(English\)](#)  
[Brochure: Poison Control Centers \(Spanish\)](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 1](#)  
[Poster: Candy or Medicine Poster 2](#)

**Marketing:** Check local newspapers' calendar of events to see what safety or health fairs are already scheduled in your area and contact them early enough to be able to get a booth. Place announcements in your newsletter; ask local partners' to place in their newsletters; put flyers in public libraries and retail stores; ask local radio station to do a PSA.



## Working with the Media

The media can be used to deliver a message or to help promote a poison prevention event. This document provides the tools to determine what is newsworthy, how to create a media list, what materials to develop and tips for pitching a story.

### In the News

When trying to use the media to deliver a message or promote an event, it helps to know what factors the media will consider when deciding whether to cover the story or event:

- **Impact**, or the number of people affected by the issue, is important. Leverage the story by providing context and statistics, such as the fact that more than 2 million poisonings are reported each year. To gain credibility, let reporters know you are participating in or organizing a [National Poison Prevention Week](#) event or other local event about poison prevention.
- **Proximity** of the event is imperative. National outlets probably won't cover a small community event, but the local outlets may stop by. Knowing local poisoning statistics also can help.
- **Prominence** of those attending the event may increase media attention. Let reporters know if local celebrities or political officials support the cause.
- **Controversy and success stories** always are of interest to the media. For example, highlight a person's unintentional poisoning and his or her success in calling the toll-free Poison Help line. Real-life stories are more interesting to general media outlets than raw facts and reports. There is a better chance of getting more in-depth coverage if there is a human interest element — someone who has been personally affected by a poisoning.
- **Timeliness** of the outreach is essential. For a weekly or monthly newsletter, events that have occurred since its previous issue may be considered timely, whereas for broadcast outlets, a reporter might only be interested in "breaking news."

Hosting a local event is often not enough to pique the interest of a reporter. The reporter must have a sense of the impact the issue has on the community and pair it with a local story to provide color. For example, the issuing of a local government proclamation during [National Poison Prevention Week](#) is an example of a story that may pique the interest of a local reporter because it demonstrates a



community-wide effort to promote poison awareness and involves prominent political figures. If paired with a family that experienced a poison incident in their home that other local families can relate to, this is a story the local newspaper would likely take interest in.

**Quick Tip: Monitor the news and build on the trends that are capturing attention when researching where and how to pitch, or convince, a reporter to cover the story.**

## Targeting a Specific Audience

Determine the target audience. Different stories are effective in different sections of newspapers. Articles on unintentional poisonings written for parents with young children are more likely to be found in the health section. Articles written for gardeners on the proper use of pesticides are more likely to be found in the home and garden section. Story materials can also be submitted for specialized audiences. These can be placed in the newsletters of garden clubs, schools, kennel clubs, and community service organizations. The [fact sheets](#) in this kit can be used to write these articles. Determining the target audience for the story will allow it to be pitched to the reporter/editor who would be most likely to write about it.

**Quick Tip: Having an audience to target will help shape your media list and pitches – it is possible for a story to target more than one audience.**

## Creating a Media List

The next step is to create a media list, a useful tool that will help keep an accurate, up-to-date, organized list of reporters to contact when there is a story. The list should include the name of the outlet, contact names, phone numbers, addresses, fax numbers and e-mail addresses.

Look for stories related to poisonings in daily and weekly newspapers, local television affiliates, radio stations, newswire services, Internet news outlets, magazines, newsletters and business trade publications in the area. Reporters who covered an issue before or demonstrate a concern for a particular population (e.g., parents, seniors) are likely to be interested in another story on that topic.

To get more ideas of who to include on the media list and their contact information and to find reporters' contact information, use the media directories at the local library or bookstore (Bacon's directories, the Yellow Book, Gebbies All-In-One Directory, Lexus Nexus and Google News). Call the outlet to verify their contact information and determine if they are the most appropriate reporters for the story.

Quick Tip: **Frequently update the media list to stay current with all changes. Remember that media sources (radio, newspapers, and TV) and various clubs and service organizations often have online versions of their publications.**

## Materials

Reporters are flooded with story pitches daily, so provide them with clear and concise information to make developing the story an easy decision. The more time reporters can spend developing the story, the more accurate and detailed it will be. Consider developing one or more of the following materials to help garner media coverage:

- **Media advisory** – A one-page invitation to the event that outlines the schedule or specific details, along with a brief description; distributed in advance of an event (a week) to invite media to attend. This tends to follow a “who, what, when, where” format.
- **Press release** – Provides background, describes the activities, and includes a quote by the group’s spokesperson; distributed the day of the event or day when new information or release of information is issued to provide reporters with details. When writing a press release, assume that the reporter will read the release and write the story directly from the release – think about what the story should say and what the headline should be.
- **Op-ed** – Expresses the opinion of the writer about important issues. To write an op-ed, take a side on the topic, support the case, make it relevant and include areas of expertise. The more high-profile the op-ed author is, the more likely it is to be placed. Before drafting, review recent op-ed submissions in the publication to get a sense of what the publication has been running and by whom.
- **Letter to the editor** – A short (one or two paragraphs) and timely response to a news article, such as in follow-up to a relevant story with poisoning statistics. Submit the letter within a few hours after first reading the story – time is of the essence.

When submitting materials for consideration to a reporter, be prepared to also give them the names of local experts (someone from the local poison control center, a doctor, a veterinarian, someone with a personal poisoning experience, etc.), from whom they can get a quote. Give them additional materials, such as fact sheets (from this toolkit or others), sources for additional data and the link to a Web site (see Additional Resources section of this kit).

Quick Tip: **For op-eds and letters to the editor, most newspapers have specific guidelines that submissions must meet. Be sure to know what those are, including word counts, method of submission, etc.**

## Pitching Your Story

Pitching, or introducing a story to a reporter and explaining why it should be covered, is an important part of the process. Be prepared for the pitch. Reporters don't have a lot of time, and they receive a lot of pitches. Make this one stand out by providing the important information quickly.

Most pitches are sent by e-mail. Customize the cover letter appropriately for each person receiving the pitch. Often, reporters may only read the first one or two sentences, so a catchy subject and lead sentence are essential. Reporters may not take the time (or may not be able) to open attachments unless they have specifically requested them, so it is important to paste any materials below the electronic signature, indicating in the text of the e-mail that it is there.

Make a follow-up phone call to reporters and ask them if they had a chance to read the materials. If no one answers, do not leave a voicemail right away, but instead keep trying back at other times. Persistence is key. Call during the middle of the day (between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.), and try not to call late in the day or week (such as Friday afternoon). Many reporters are often on a deadline in the afternoon and are looking for their story ideas earlier in the week. Do not press a reporter who is on a deadline. For radio stations, mention that they can download and play the Poison Help public service announcements available at [www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov).

Work to build relationships with the reporters and use every opportunity to spread the word – post a comment online in response to a recent article and find other ways to get the word out about poison prevention in the community. Be sure to always identify yourself when making a comment on a story – transparency is critical.

**Quick Tip: Write out your pitch and practice your pitches with colleagues or in the mirror to perfect your strategy. Also, read what the reporter has written in the past and reference a story if applicable in your pitch.**

For more information on how to draw media attention to poison prevention during National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) and other events, visit [www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov) to view the NPPW Planner.



# **Myths and Realities**

# Over-the-counter medications are safer than prescription medications.

**REALITY:** All medications, even those sold without a prescription, may be harmful if not taken at the recommended dose or if taken with other substances, i.e., alcohol and certain medications.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Herbal remedies are safe because they are natural.

**REALITY:** Herbal remedies can interact with many types of medicines. They are not FDA approved for treatment of any kind. Always tell your doctor which herbal remedies you are taking.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

# Splitting pills is a safe way to save money.

**REALITY:** Not always. Some medicines are time released or coated to prevent nausea. Splitting pills could produce harmful side-effects or be ineffective. Check with your pharmacist to see which ones can and can't be split.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Children can take adult medication, just in smaller doses.**

**REALITY:** Children react differently than adults to the same medication. Always ask your child's doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about the correct dose of a medication.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**The bathroom medicine cabinet is a good place to store medications.**

**REALITY:** Medicine cabinets are never a good place to store medications because they could become affected by heat and humidity. Put medicines in a dry, cool place away from sunlight and out of the reach of children.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Medications can be safely  
taken with any liquid.**

**REALITY:** Liquids such as grapefruit or cranberry juice can change the effectiveness of the medication. Also check to see if alcohol should be avoided with your medications.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Buying medications on the Internet is safe.

**REALITY:** Care should be used before purchasing Internet medication. Only buy medications from pharmacy Web sites that have the VIPPS (Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites) symbol to make sure that the drugs have been approved, are not counterfeits, and meet US standards.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Sharing medication with other people for the same ailment is okay.**

**REALITY:** It's never okay to share something your doctor prescribed for you. The doctor takes many things into consideration such as age, weight, existing medical conditions and other prescriptions.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# My doctor knows which medications I am taking.

**REALITY:** Not always. Review your complete list of prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and dietary supplements with your doctor at every visit.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**People on painkillers  
cannot work demanding  
jobs or drive safely.**

**REALITY:** If taken properly,  
prescription painkillers can help people  
function normally in their everyday  
lives.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

# Addiction is inevitable if you take painkillers.

**REALITY:** You should not be afraid to use painkillers prescribed to you for valid medical reasons. If you are concerned, discuss this with your doctor.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**If you don't like a medicine,  
you can stop taking it at any  
time.**

**REALITY:** Many medications can have adverse effects if stopped abruptly. Consult your doctor prior to stopping prescribed medicines.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**  
**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# It's okay to combine medicines with alcohol.

**REALITY:** Many medicines can be dangerous when taken with alcohol; in some cases making it difficult to breathe and even causing death.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**If a little bit of a drug is good,  
then a lot is even better.**

**REALITY:** Sometimes a little bit of a drug can be enough, but increasing the dosage can lead to undesirable and severe effects. Directions on the container or from the physician, nurse, or other care provider should always be followed precisely.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Helpful drugs are legal,  
while harmful drugs are illegal.**

**REALITY:** Any drug has the potential to be harmful if not taken properly. Drugs with a higher potential for misuse are more strictly controlled.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# True or False?

In some states, there are more overdosing deaths than motor vehicle deaths

**TRUE:** District of Columbia and Massachusetts in 2005.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Within a ten year span,  
medication-related poisoning  
deaths among Americans adults  
have more than doubled.

**TRUE:** This represents a greater  
number than heroin deaths in the 70's,  
cocaine deaths in the 80's, or crack  
deaths in the 90's.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

The greatest number of drug-related poisoning deaths is occurring among white men ages 35 to 44.

**True:** Men are 2.1 times more likely than women to suffer from unintentional drug poisoning.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

Drug interactions only happen between prescription medications.

**False:** Drug interactions can happen with the use of over-the-counter medicines as well as vitamins and dietary supplements.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



All pharmacies will have your medical information, including allergies and other prescriptions, so it doesn't matter if you go to more than one pharmacy.

**False:** Pharmacies don't share patient information. Each company has their own database and/or network.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

With the exception of sleeping pills, it's okay to drink alcohol while taking prescription medications.

**False:** Other medications, especially painkillers, have interactions with alcohol. As with any medicine, check with your doctor or pharmacist.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

More people have reported abusing prescription medications than cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants, and heroin combined.

**True:** More than 16.3 million people reported abusing prescription medications in 2006.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

The best way to dispose of medications is to flush them down the toilet.

**False:** When disposing of unused medications you should put pills in a plastic zip-lock bag that contains wet coffee grounds or cat litter.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

It is always okay to crush medicines and put them in food to make them easier to take.

**False:** Some medicines are time-released or coated to prevent stomach upset. Check with your pharmacist to see whether or not you can crush them.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

If a relative has the same ailment as you, it's okay to share medicine.

**False:** The medicine the doctor prescribed for you should not be shared with anyone else. It is prescribed for your sensitivities, weight, sex, and habits – not someone else's.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

It's okay to buy medications over the Internet because all sites are safe.

**False:** When shopping to get your prescriptions filled on the Internet look for sites that have the VIPPS (Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites) seal.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

If a medication is not relieving symptoms the first day, it's okay to take an additional dose.

**False:** Some medicines take time to start working. When prescribed a new medication, ask your doctor how long it takes to work.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



The likelihood of drug interactions increases with the number of drugs being taken.

**True:** You expose yourself to more potential interactions the more medicines you take. This includes over-the-counter as well as vitamins and dietary supplements.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

If you suspect a drug overdose and the person is breathing and responsive, the best thing to do is walk them around.

**False:** Call the poison control number, **800-222-1222.**

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

What does ICE stand for and where should we have it?

## **ICE – In Case of Emergency**

It should be in your list of stored numbers on your cell phone and is usually your closest family member.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



# **Preventing and Responding to Overdoses**



## Poisoning Trends

The trend in poisonings has changed significantly during the past decades – adult (ages 20-64) poisoning deaths have greatly increased. Adult poison deaths most frequently involve drugs (prescription, over-the-counter), illegal drugs, and alcohol.

Drug overdoses are the second leading cause of injury-related deaths.

There are ways to address this increase in unintentional overdosing deaths.

**People attempting suicide need additional help.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Make a List

- Make a list of the prescription medications you are taking with dose, frequency, name of the pharmacy.
- List all over-the-counter medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements or herbal products that you take regularly.
- List your allergies to medication and food.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Ask Questions

- Ask your doctor for the purpose of the medication that is prescribed and how the medication should be taken.
- Check to see if there are any restrictions regarding alcohol use or other drugs.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Follow Directions

- Only take the medication as prescribed.
- Never take someone else's medication.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



## Check the 5 “Rights”

**These are five simple phrases to use to help prevent errors when taking or giving medicines:**

- Right Medication
- Right Person
- Right Amount
- Right Way
- Right Time

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Pay Attention

- Turn on lights before taking medication.
- Use eyeglasses, if necessary, to read the label every time you take a dose.
- Inspect all medicines before you take them to make sure it looks like what you usually take.
- Keep medications in their original containers.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Be Prepared

- Put the nationwide poison control center number – **1-800-222-1222** – beside every phone in your home and in your cell phone.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Store Properly

- Don't store medications in the bathroom medicine cabinet or in direct sunlight.
- Don't store medications with food items.
- Keep out of the sight and reach of children.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Dispose Properly

- Only purchase and keep medications that are actually needed.
- Remove and destroy all identifying personal information from prescription bottles.
- Dispose of expired or unneeded medications by spoiling them with coffee grounds or kitty litter.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Symptoms of an Overdose

- Depends on the type or combination of medications
- Medications affect people differently and may cause different reactions
- Side effects may become more pronounced and other effects of the medication may emerge
- Symptoms require immediate response, or they may lead to death

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

Drug Class	Medical Uses	Examples
Painkiller (Opioid Analgesic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of acute or chronic pain</li> <li>• Relief of coughs</li> <li>• Anti-diarrheal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codeine (Empirin®, Tylenol 1, 2, 3)</li> <li>• Hydrocodone (Vicodin®)</li> <li>• Hydromorphone (Dilaudid®)</li> <li>• Meperidine (Demerol®)</li> <li>• Methadone (Dolophine®)</li> <li>• Morphine</li> <li>• Oxycodone (OxyContin® Percodan®)</li> <li>• Propoxyphene (Darvon®)</li> </ul>
Sedative- hypnotics	<p><b><i>Benzodiazepines</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety and panic disorders</li> <li>• Acute stress reactions</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Barbiturates</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insomnia</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Seizure control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alprazolam (Xanax®)</li> <li>• Chlordiazepoxide HCL (Librium®)</li> <li>• Clonazepam (Klonopin®)</li> <li>• Diazepam (Valium®)</li> <li>• Lorazepam (Ativan®)</li> <li>• Butalbital (Fiorinal®)</li> <li>• Meprobamate (Miltown®)</li> <li>• Pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal®)</li> <li>• PhenobarbitalSecobarbital (Seconal®)</li> </ul>
Stimulants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention deficit disorder and attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder (ADD, AD/HD)</li> <li>• Narcolepsy</li> <li>• Weight loss</li> <li>• Depression (rarely)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amphetamine-dextroamphetamine (Adderall®)</li> <li>• Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine®)</li> <li>• Methylphenidate (Ritalin®)</li> <li>• Sibutramine (Meridia®)</li> </ul>

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## Common side effects of painkillers and sedatives, which slow down the body's systems:

- Changes in skin – color or feel
- Changes in pupil size
- Difficulty breathing/slow breathing
- Sleepiness/drowsiness
- Confusion
- Unresponsiveness
- Nervousness, restlessness

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



## Common side effects of stimulants, which speed up the body's systems:

- Difficulty breathing/slow breathing
- Headache, dizziness
- Change in pupil size
- Vomiting
- Shaking/seizures

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

## Every Second Counts

- An unintentional overdose is a medical emergency and must be treated immediately – every second counts.
- The emergency care provided depends on whether or not the person is **responsive or nonresponsive**.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

## If a person is responsive:

- Determine what medication was taken, when it was taken, and how much was taken.
- Call the poison control center number, **(800) 222-1222**, speak with a poison specialist, and determine how to proceed.
- Keep the person calm, talk to them, and watch for any changes in their physical appearance.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

## A person is unresponsive if he or she:

- Doesn't wake up when their name is loudly called
- Is having trouble breathing or is not breathing
- Can't respond to you verbally
- Appears confused
- Is having seizures

**Lay them on their side and call 911.**



Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



# True or False?

Read the statements and determine if they are true or false.  
Flip the card to check your answer.

# **Good Luck!**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Over-the-counter medications are safer  
than prescription medications.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** All medications, even those sold without a prescription, may be harmful if not taken at the recommended dose or if taken with other substances.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**Herbal remedies are safe because they  
are natural.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Herbal remedies can interact with many types of medicines. They are not FDA approved for treatment of any kind. Always tell your doctor which herbal remedies you are taking.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**You should always check with your  
doctor or pharmacist before splitting any  
pill.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True:** Some medicines are time released or coated to prevent nausea. Splitting pills could produce harmful side-effects or be ineffective.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**Children can take adult  
medication, just in smaller doses.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Children react differently than adults to the same medication. Always ask your child's doctor or pharmacist if you have questions about the correct dose of a medication.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**You should not store medicine in  
the bathroom medicine cabinet.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True:** Medicine cabinets are never a good place to store medications because they could become affected by heat and humidity. Put medicines in a dry, cool place away from sunlight and out of the reach of children.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**Medications can be safely taken  
with any liquid.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Liquids such as grapefruit or cranberry juice can change the effectiveness of the medication. Also check to see if alcohol should be avoided with your medications.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**It is always safe to buy  
medications on the Internet.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Use care when purchasing Internet medication. Buy only from pharmacy websites that have the VIPPS (Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites) symbol to make sure that the drugs have been approved, are not counterfeits, and meet US standards.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**Sharing medication with other people for the same ailment is okay.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** It's never okay to share something your doctor prescribed for you. The doctor takes many things into consideration such as age, weight, existing medical conditions and other prescriptions.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**My doctor knows which  
medications I am taking.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Not always. Review your complete list of prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and dietary supplements with your doctor at every visit.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



**Addiction is inevitable if you take  
painkillers.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** You should not be afraid to use painkillers prescribed for you for valid medical reasons. If you are concerned, discuss this with your doctor.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**If you don't like a medicine, you  
can stop taking it at any time.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Many medications can have adverse effects if stopped abruptly. Consult your doctor prior to stopping prescribed medications.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge

**You should check before  
combining medicine with alcohol.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**True:** Many medicines can be dangerous when taken with alcohol; in some cases making it difficult to breathe, and even causing death.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**If a little bit of a drug is good,  
then a lot is even better.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Sometimes a little bit of a drug can be enough, but increasing the dosage can lead to undesirable and severe effects. Directions on the container or from the physician, nurse, or other care provider should always be followed precisely.

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222**

**24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**



**Helpful drugs are legal, while  
harmful drugs are illegal.**

**Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222  
24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge**

**False:** Any drug has the potential to be harmful if not taken properly. Drugs with a higher potential for misuse are more strictly controlled.

Poison Control Centers 1-800-222-1222

24 hours a day – 7 days a week – free of charge



## Interactive Exhibit Ideas

**DO NOT walk away from a display if you have poisons on the table!**

Many poison prevention educators have developed displays and games that they use to educate the public on various aspects of poison prevention. Call the nationwide toll-free poison prevention number – 800-222-1222 – to talk with your local poison educator about their displays and games. Many of the local poison control centers have educational materials available on their website. Go the website for the American Association of Poison Control Centers, <http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/>, and click on the “Find Local Poison Center” to find information about your local poison control center.

Below are some suggestions for activities and displays that you can make and use.

### Candy/Medicine Display

Make a display of candies and medicines that look alike by gluing them side by side on a piece of paper. Put the paper on a poster board or in a clear plastic box frame. Let children guess which ones are medicines and which ones are candies.

**Explain that in real life, they should NOT guess, but “Ask Before Tasting”!**

Some examples for the display include:

- White Tylenol caplets and white Good n’ Plenty
- Tums and Necco wafers
- Benadryl and pink Good n’ Plenty
- Red round Sudafed pills and Red Hots
- Colored gel-caps (any kind) and jelly beans
- Pastel round flat antacids and Sweetarts
- Baby aspirin and Sweetarts
- Jelly bean vitamins and jelly beans
- Gummi bear vitamins and gummi bears
- Vita-balls and gum balls
- Aspergum and cinnamon gum
- Round coated Advil and tropical M&M’s
- Brown round Tylenol and M&M’s or Skittles



*Gummi bear vitamins  
and gummi bears*

## Measuring the Correct Dosage

You will need to supply a variety of measuring tools (cups, spoons, droppers, etc.), small plastic containers, and colored liquid.

- Explain the following scenario to the attendees: Mom just got a prescription from the pharmacy for her 2½ year old child. The instructions on the bottle say give 1mL 1 time per day.
- Have the attendees select the correct measuring tool and measure the amount of medicine Mom needs to give. They should use the liquid provided as the “medicine” and pour it into the small plastic containers.
- They should choose one with mL (milliliter) marked on the tool and measure out 1 mL. A common mistake is to measure 1 tsp. which would be 5 mL of medicine instead of the needed 1 mL.)
- Many people make mistakes while measuring medicine – either giving too much medicine or not enough. Some of these mistakes can be quite serious in children as well as in adults.

English Volume	Metric Volume
1 teaspoon (t, tsp)	5 mL (cc)
1 tablespoon (T, tbsp)	15 mL (cc)
1 ounce (volume)	30 mL (cc)
1 cup (8 ounces)	240 mL (cc)
1 pint (16 ounces)	480 mL (cc)
1 quart (32 ounces)	960 mL (cc)

*Courtesy of Connecticut Poison Control Center:  
<http://poisoncontrol.uchc.edu/education/programs/healthfair.htm>*

## True or False Flipchart

Print out the questions and answers for the [True or False Flipchart](#) on cover stock (heavy paper) with each question and answer on a separate piece of paper. Laminate the sheets and punch three holes in top of the sheets. Place the sheets in a ½” or 1” three ring binder. This will hold the pages together, but allow the pages to be flipped. To get the display to stand on the table, fold the notebook inside out so the rings are facing upward. Put the first part of the Velcro dots in the two outside corners of both the front and back covers of the binders. Put the second part of the Velcro dots on both ends of two pieces of ribbons that are about 5” to 6” long. Then join the ribbons to the Velcro dots that are in the corners. This will form a tent that will allow the questions and answers to be read then flipped over.



## National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) Poster Contest

### Guidelines:

1. The contest is open to two age categories
  - Ages 8 and younger
  - Ages 9 to 13
2. The purpose is to identify a poster that can be used to educate the public about ways to prevent unintentional poisonings in the home.
3. The deadline for entry is June 1<sup>st</sup> each year.
4. There are two themes for the poster contest: Poisonings Span a Lifetime and Children Act Fast, So Do Poisons. Entries should illustrate a message that communicates that poisonings can happen to people of any age including children, adults and the elderly. Visit <http://www.poisonprevention.org> for poison safety resources, fast facts, and ideas.
5. Entries **should not** include any state or regional logos or symbols. Trademark symbols, brand names, or characters (e.g., Snoopy) are also prohibited.
6. There are no size requirements for submission. Entries can be horizontal or vertical.
7. The original art must be submitted. Copies will not be accepted.
8. Each entry must be accompanied by the Artwork Release and Submission Form ([www.poisonprevention.org](http://www.poisonprevention.org)) and all information must be legibly filled out.
9. All poster entries should be mailed to:
10. American Association of Poison Control Centers – Poster Contest
11. 515 King Street, Suite 510, Alexandria, VA 22314
12. By signing the Artwork Release and Submission Form, parent/guardian gives permission to the Council to adapt, reproduce and distribute the posters nationally.
13. The following information will be added to the winning poster: Poison Hotline toll free number, Poison Prevention Week date, artist name and age, submitting organization, Poison Prevention Week Council mailing address and website.
14. The posters will be judged by members of the National Poison Prevention Week Council. The artist of the winning poster will be notified by July 1<sup>st</sup> each year.



## Science Fair Project

Copy and paste this onto your own letterhead  
and fill out the appropriate information.

In conjunction with [Name of School]'s regular science fair project, [Name of Your Organization] is sponsoring a special prize for the best science fair project on the subject of medication safety.

More than 25,000 Americans die from an unintentional drug overdose annually. These deaths were from a poisonous substance or a combination of substances that were designed to help heal or provide relief from pain, not to kill.

The trend in poisonings has changed significantly during the past decades. While children's poisoning deaths have declined, adult poisoning deaths are greatly increasing. Many of these deaths are related to medicines (prescription, over-the-counter), illegal drugs, and alcohol. It is possible to reverse the trend of increasing overdoses. Being informed, paying attention, and following the medication instructions can greatly reduce the risk of overdosing.

Your science fair project must follow the guidelines of your school, so check with your science teacher. Some possible formats include an essay, a 3D representation, or an experiment. It can deal with any aspect of medication safety, such as statistics on medication overdosing, where medications are commonly stored and the risks this poses, the effectiveness of child-resistant packaging, product look-a-likes, etc. Do **NOT** experiment with medications themselves.

If you want your science fair project to be considered for this additional prize, please fill in the information below and return to [Contact Person] by [Deadline Date]. Good luck!

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Student's School: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by: [Name of Your Organization]  
Deadline Date: [Day Month, Year]  
Prizes: [List Prizes]



### Messages for Children

**These are the messages to be conveyed. They will need to be tailored for the grade level.**

- Poisons can make people sick, or even kill them.
- If you think you or someone else ate or drank something that is poison, tell a grown up right away.
- Only take medicines that your parent or caregiver gives to you.
- If you are not sure what something is, do not eat or drink it.



## Sample Letter to School

**Copy and paste this letter onto your own letterhead  
and fill out the appropriate information.**

[Date]

[School name]

[Address]

[City, State, Zip]

Dear Principal [Name]:

In 2006, more than 25,000 Americans died from an unintentional drug overdose. These deaths were from a poisonous substance or a combination of substances that were designed to help heal or provide relief from pain, not to kill. According to our local poison control center, there were [Get Statistics from Local Poison Control Center] poisonings in [Location] alone in [Year].

We would like to work with students in [grade] by giving them simple medication safety messages, helping them complete some handouts on poison prevention, and holding a poison prevention poster contest.

I will call you next week to see if we can join together in addressing this serious public health problem affecting our children.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Title]





### Sample PTA Flyer

**To:** The Parents of Children at [Name of School]

**Who:** [Name of Your Organization]

**What:** **Medication Safety Presentation**

**Where:** [Name of School]

**When:** [Date & Time of Meeting]

**Why:** **More than 25,000 Americans die from an unintentional drug overdose annually. These deaths were from a poisonous substance or a combination of substances that were designed to help heal or provide relief from pain, not to kill.**

[Name of your organization] is interested in the well-being of the citizens in our community and will be giving a medication safety presentation to help keep our children safe and healthy.

For more information, please contact us at:

[Name]  
[Organization]  
[Address]  
[City, State, Zip]  
[Telephone]  
[Email]  
[Web Site]



## Risk Factors for Overdosing

Painkillers have been around for a long time. So why has there just recently been such a great increase in the number of overdoses from painkillers?

**Overdose:** the ingestion or application of a drug or other substance in quantities greater than are recommended or generally practiced.

Some of the reasons include:

- Increased use of medications in general and painkillers in particular
- Increased use of multiple medications, which increases the potential of drug interactions
- Availability of newer controlled release formulas and longer lasting medications – both prescription and over-the-counter
- Increase in consumer advertising of medications, leading to the request for medication which might not be needed and may interact dangerously with painkillers

**Most people do not take a painkiller or other drugs with the intention of overdosing.**

However, when prescription medications are used in ways other than how they were intended problems can arise. These can include overdose, toxic reactions, and serious drug interactions. This can lead to conditions such as slowed or stopped breathing, heart beating too fast or too slow, dangerously high or low blood pressure, seizures, and death.

Some of the common medication mistakes that can lead to overdosing include:

- **IMPROPER USE:** medication instructions are not followed or understood (i.e., do not crush or chew, do not mix with alcohol)
- **OVERUSE:** too much or the wrong strength of a medication is taken (i.e., taking additional doses for breakthrough pain)
- **UNDERUSE:** a prescribed medication is not taken when it should be (i.e., disruption of tolerance)
- **INTERACTIONS:** prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, dietary supplements, and vitamins are used together causing potentially dangerous combinations (i.e., doctor and/or pharmacist may not have complete list of these items) full or part time.

- **MEDICAL ERROR:** a mistake is made in the prescription process (i.e., administer the wrong drug, strength, or dose of medications; confusion over look-alike/sound-alike drugs; taken incorrectly)
- **ILLICIT USE:** taking someone else's prescription or combining medications with street drugs (i.e., may be wrong dosage; may cause allergic reaction, may interact with other medications)

Virtually any prescription drug can be consumed for reasons other than its medical purpose; however, it is usually mood-altering drugs that are the focus of abuse. Some of the more popular prescription drugs for abuse include opiate-based drugs for pain relief, tranquillizers, stimulants and amphetamines, and sedatives and barbiturates.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a handout.**



## Symptoms of Overdoses

Symptoms can vary depending on the type of medication or combination of medications taken.

Additionally, medications affect each person differently and may cause different reactions. If an overdose occurs, side effects from the medication may become more pronounced and other effects of the medication may emerge. These symptoms require immediate action, or they may lead to death.

Drug Class	Medical Uses	Examples
<b>Painkiller (Opioid Analgesic)</b>	Management of acute or chronic pain Relief of coughs Anti-diarrheal	Codeine (Empirin®, Tylenol 1, 2, 3) Hydrocodone (Vicodin®) Hydromorphone (Dilaudid®) Meperidine (Demerol®) Methadone (Dolophine®) Morphine Oxycodone (OxyContin® Percodan®) Propoxyphene (Darvon®)
<b>Sedative-hypnotics</b>	<b>Benzodiazepines</b> Anxiety and panic disorders Acute stress reactions <b>Barbiturates</b> Insomnia Anxiety Seizure control	Alprazolam (Xanax®) Chlordiazepoxide HCL (Librium®) Clonazepam (Klonopin®) Diazepam (Valium®) Lorazepam (Ativan®) Butalbital (Fiorinal®) Meprobamate (Miltown®) Pentobarbital sodium (Nembutal®) Phenobarbital Secobarbital (Seconal®)
<b>Stimulants</b>	Attention deficit disorder and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADD, AD/HD) Narcolepsy Weight loss Depression (rarely)	Amphetamine-dextroamphetamine (Adderall®) Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine®) Methylphenidate (Ritalin®) Sibutramine (Meridia®)

If a person swallowed too much medicine, or the wrong type of medicine, call the nationwide 24-hour poison control center number, **800-222-1222**, for assistance.

Bring all bottles of medication you believe the person took to the phone with you. It is helpful to provide prescription information, dosage, and possible amount of medication taken. If a person collapses or stops breathing, call 911 or a local emergency number for immediate emergency assistance.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a handout.**



## Preventing Overdoses

**It is possible to reverse the trend of increasing overdoses. Being informed, paying attention, and following the recommendations below can greatly reduce the risk of overdosing.**

### MAKE A LIST

- Make a list of prescription medications you are taking now. Include the dose, how often you take them, and the name of the pharmacy. Take your medication list every time you go to your doctor's office and the pharmacy, especially if you see more than one doctor.
- List all over-the-counter medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements or herbal products that you take regularly.
- List your allergies to medication and food.

### ASK QUESTIONS

- Ask your doctor or dentist for the purpose of the medication that is prescribed. Have that information written on the prescription. Many drug names look alike and knowing the purpose helps you and the pharmacist double-check the prescription.
- Understand how the medication should be taken. Some medications can be harmful if crushed or chewed.
- Ask if there are some foods, liquids, or activities that should be avoided with the medication.
- Check to see if there are any restrictions regarding alcohol use when taking the medications. Be aware of potential risks when used with street drugs.

### FOLLOW DIRECTIONS

- Only take the medication as prescribed. If the medication is not relieving the symptoms, do not take additional doses – more is not necessarily better.
- Never take someone else's medication. You don't know if it will interact with your medications, the dose may be wrong for you, or you may be allergic to it.

### CHECK THE 5 RIGHTS

- Right Medication
- Right Person
- Right Amount
- Right Way
- Right Time

## **BE PREPARED**

- Put the nationwide poison control center number – 1-800-222-1222 – beside every phone in your home and in your cell phone.

## **PAY ATTENTION**

- Use caution when buying drugs over the Internet. Products bought on the Internet could be fake, sub-potent, or not approved by the FDA. They could also be counterfeit. Use only U.S. sites that are licensed by a State board of pharmacy.
- Carefully compare the appearance and packaging of the medicines bought online with the same medicine you have gotten in the past from a conventional pharmacy.
- Turn on lights before taking medication. Look at all medicines before you take them. If it doesn't look like what you usually take, ask why. It might be a generic drug, or it might be the wrong drug.
- Use eyeglasses, if necessary, to read the label every time you take a dose to make sure you have the right drug and that you are following the instructions.
- Use actual measuring spoons (tablespoon, teaspoon) to precisely measure liquid dosages.
- Keep medications in their original containers. Many pills look alike, so by keeping them in their original containers, you will know which is which and how to take them.

## **STORE PROPERLY**

- Don't store medications in the bathroom medicine cabinet or in direct sunlight. Humidity, heat and light can affect medications' potency and safety.
- Keep track of medications used and remaining.
- Keep out of the sight and reach of children.
- Don't store medications with food items.

## **DISPOSE PROPERLY**

- Reduce supply of medicines on hand to prevent mix ups, misuse and theft.
- Only purchase and keep medications that are actually needed.
- Dispose of expired or unneeded medications. Crush solid medications and mix with kitty litter or coffee grounds (or any material that absorbs the dissolved medication and makes it less appealing for pets or children to eat), then place in a sealed plastic bag. Check for approved state and local collection programs or with area hazardous waste facilities.
- Remove and destroy all identifying personal information (prescription label) from the medication container.

**This [fact sheet](#) is available as a [handout](#).**



## Emergency Care for a Suspected Drug Overdose

People on medications may be at risk for overdose.

- An unintentional overdose is a medical emergency and must be treated immediately – every second counts.
- The emergency care provided depends on whether or not the person is **responsive or nonresponsive**.

### If a person is responsive:

- Determine what medication was taken, when it was taken, and how much was taken.
- Call the poison control center number, **(800) 222-1222**, speak with a poison specialist, and determine how to proceed.
- Keep the person calm, talk to them, and watch for any changes in their physical appearance.

### If a person is unresponsive:

Lay them on their side and call 911. Unresponsiveness is determined if:

- You can't wake them up.
- They are having trouble breathing or not breathing.
- They are having trouble responding to you verbally.
- They appear confused.
- They are having seizures.





## Poison Prevention

## Educator Kit



# Community Medication Safety

## Handout: Medication Worksheet

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Smoker? ☐ Yes ☐ No Alcohol? ☐ Yes ☐ No Frequency \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies to medications: \_\_\_\_\_

Family history of medical conditions or addictions: \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible][illegible]

## QUESTIONS FOR NEW MEDICATIONS:

Why do I need this medicine and what are its expected results? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How soon will the medicine work? \_\_\_\_\_

How long will I need to take this medication? \_\_\_\_\_

How is this medication administered or delivered? Can it be cut, crushed, or  
chewed? \_\_\_\_\_

Can I take this medicine given my family history? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can I become dependent or addicted to it? If yes, what are its addictive qualities?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does it interact with alcohol, over the counter or prescribed drugs? If so, which

ones? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Will I experience any side-effects while on this medicine and will they go away?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does this medication contain anything that can cause an allergic reaction? \_\_\_\_\_

Should I avoid certain activities while taking this medicine? \_\_\_\_\_

What should I do if I miss a dose or take too much? \_\_\_\_\_

When should I seek help if symptoms persist? \_\_\_\_\_

Who can I call if I have any questions? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the brand and generic names of the medicine? \_\_\_\_\_

What does it look like and what forms does it come in? \_\_\_\_\_

How should I store this medicine? \_\_\_\_\_