

## Poison Prevention

The following information is from the Centers for Disease Control as a reminder that tragic and life altering events happen suddenly and unexpectedly. However with a little common sense and precaution, they can be avoided. Please post the number to the poison control center by your phones.

**1- 800 - 222 - 1222**

### Poisoning Prevention

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Millions of poisoning exposures occur each year in the United States, resulting in nearly 900,000 visits to emergency departments. About 90% of poisonings happen in the home, and more than half of them involve children under age six. Many poisonings can be prevented if safety precautions are taken around the home. If a poisoning occurs, calling a poison control center can help ensure rapid, appropriate treatment.

### Safety Tips

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#### Preventing Poisonings in the Home

The simple steps that follow, provided by the American Association of Poison Control Centers, can help you protect children from poisons:

- **Post the telephone number** for your poison control center near your phone, in a place where all family members would be able to find it quickly in an emergency.
- **Remove all nonessential drugs** and household products from your home. Discard them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- If you have small children, **avoid keeping highly toxic products**, such as drain cleaners, in the home, garage, shed, or other place children can access.
- Buy medicines and household products in **child-resistant packaging** and be sure that caps are always on tight. Do not remove child-safety caps. Avoid keeping medicines, vitamins, or household products in anything but their original packaging.
- Store all of your medicines and household products in a **locked closet or cabinet**, including products and medicines with child-resistant containers.
- Crawl around your house, including inside your closets, to **inspect it from a child's point of view**. You'll likely find a poisoning hazard you hadn't noticed before.
- **Never refer to medicine or vitamins as "candy."**
- Make sure visiting grandparents, family friends, or other care givers **keep their medications away from children**. For example, if Grandma keeps pills in her purse, make sure the purse is out of children's reach.
- **Keep a bottle of syrup of ipecac** in your home. This can be used to induce vomiting. Use it only when the poison control center tells you to.

- **Avoid products** such as cough syrup or mouth wash **that contain alcohol**, These are hazardous for young children. Look for alcohol-free alternatives.
- **Keep cosmetics and beauty products out of children's reach.** Remember that hair permanents and relaxers are toxins as well.

## **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

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Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless, poisonous gas that can cause sickness and death. The gas is produced by the incomplete burning of fuels such as natural gas, oil, kerosene, coal, and wood. Fuel-burning appliances that are not working properly or are installed incorrectly can produce fatal concentrations of carbon monoxide in your home. Other hazards include burning charcoal indoors and running a car in the garage, both of which can lead to dangerous levels of CO in your home.

Every year, more than 200 Americans die from CO produced by fuel-burning appliances, and several thousand go to emergency departments for treatment for CO poisoning. You can prevent carbon monoxide poisonings in your home by following a few simple tips.

Install carbon monoxide alarms near bedrooms and on each floor of your home. If your alarm sounds, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission suggests that you press the reset button, call emergency services (911 or your local fire department), and immediately move to fresh air (either outdoors or near an open door or window). If you learn that fuel-burning appliances were the most likely cause of the poisoning, have a serviceperson check them for malfunction before turning them back on. Refer to the instructions on your CO alarm for more specific information about what to do if your alarm goes off.

Symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu, only without a fever (headache, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath). If you experience any of these symptoms, get fresh air immediately and contact a physician for proper diagnosis. Also, open windows and doors, turn off combustion appliances, contact emergency services, and take the steps listed above to ensure your home's safety.

To keep carbon monoxide from collecting in your home, make sure that any fuel-burning equipment, such as a furnace, stove, or heater, works properly, and never use charcoal or other grills indoors or in the garage. Do not leave your car's engine running while it's in the garage, and consider putting weather stripping around the door between the garage and the house.

## **Who Is Affected?**

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Millions of poisoning exposures occur each year in the United States, resulting in nearly 900,000 visits to the emergency department. About 90 percent of poisonings happen in the home, and common household items are often the cause. The poisons involved most often are cleaning products, pain relievers, cosmetics, personal care products, plants, and cough and cold medicines.

Children, especially those under age six are at highest risk for unintentional poisonings. Adolescents are also at risk for poisonings, both intentional and unintentional. About half of all poisonings among teens are classified as suicide attempts.

Poison control centers help millions of people each year, ensuring that poisonings are treated rapidly and correctly. Poison control centers managed more than 2 million cases of poison exposure in 1996. About three-quarters of these cases were managed at home over the telephone with the help of specialists trained in poison information. Poison control centers are extremely cost effective. For every \$1 spent on poison control centers, an estimated \$7 is saved in medical care costs. By helping people manage emergencies at home, these centers prevent about 50,000 hospitalizations and 400,000 trips to doctors' offices each year.

For more information about risk to children see the SAFE KIDS web site, [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org)