

Poisons:

Know the Facts

What should I do if I think someone has been poisoned?

Immediately call your local Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. DO NOT WAIT for the person to look or feel sick! The Poison Control Center will tell you how to help the person. Children between the ages of eight months and six years old are the most likely to be poisoned.

What is a poison?

A poison is anything that can cause sickness or death if it gets into or on the body. We are surrounded by poisons that people can eat, breathe and get in their eyes or on their skin.

- Solid poisons can be pills, batteries, plants and berries.
- Liquid poisons may be creamy or watery, and they can be any color. Some liquid poisons are household cleaning products, antifreeze, lamp oil and cough syrup.
- Spray poisons can come from a can or a bottle. Sprays can get in your eyes or lungs. Furniture polish and bug spray are examples of spray poisons.
- Gases that are poisonous can't be seen or touched. Many cannot be smelled. Some, like natural gas, have had other chemicals added so that you can smell them.

What are some dangerous poisons?

The following are some of the more common poisons. This is NOT a complete list. Call the Poison Control Center whether the item you question is listed here or not.

Medicines, Vitamins and Drinks

- Heart and blood pressure drugs
- Diabetes medication
- Tranquilizers and nerve pills
- Pain relievers
- Iron in vitamins
- Alcohol

Household Products

- Drain cleaners
- Toilet bowl cleaners
- Furniture polish
- Laundry products
- Oven cleaners
- Pesticides
- Antifreeze
- Gasoline and kerosene
- Lamp oil

Personal Care Products

- Mouthwash
- Toothpaste
- Nail glue remover
- Nail primer
- Permanent wave hair products
- Hair removal products

Plants

- Wild mushrooms
- Philodendron
- Foxglove
- Dieffenbachia
- Pokeweed
- Holly berries
- Castor beans
- Tobacco (in cigarettes)

Environmental Poisons

- Carbon monoxide
- Lead paint
- Chlorine gas (created when cleaning supplies are mixed)

How can I keep children safe from poisons?

Young children are curious. They like to put things in their mouths, especially things that look colorful or smell nice. Many poisons come in pretty colors and attractive containers, so children may mistake them for something good to eat or drink. Follow these safety tips to help keep children safe from poisons.

- Keep children where you can see them at all times, even when you answer the door or telephone. Never leave young children alone, even for just a minute!
- All medicines and cleaning products should be stored in locked cabinets, out of the reach and sight of children. Do not leave poisons on a counter or in an unlocked cabinet.
- Remember the “Before, While and After Rule.”
 - Before** using a cleaning product, read the instructions on the bottle.
 - While** using a cleaning product, never leave it unattended.
 - After** using a product, make sure the container is closed tightly. Put it back in a locked cabinet immediately.
- Keep medicines, vitamins and household products in original, labeled containers with child-resistant lids. However, remember the lids on these bottles are only “child-resistant.” They are NOT “childproof.”
- Never carry medicines or vitamins in a purse or diaper bag, where children may easily find them.
- Never call medicine “candy.” Children may try to eat medicine on their own, thinking it is candy.
- Do not take your medication in front of children.

- If you give medicine to a child, follow the instructions on the bottle carefully. After using the medicine, immediately return the bottle to a safe storage place. Never leave the child alone with the medicine.
- Safety latches on drawers and cabinets and child-resistant lids help keep poisons away from children, but they do not take the place of your careful and constant supervision.
- Install carbon monoxide and smoke detectors on each level of your house.

For more poison prevention and first aid information, call the

Poison Control Center

Serving the Residents of Kansas

Toll-free Hotline

1-800-222-1222

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS HOSPITAL
KUMED
