

# Poison Facts:

## Seasonal Poisoning Hazards: Summer

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### **Insect bites and stings**

Many insects bite or sting, but only a few are considered dangerous to humans.

- Brown recluse spiders are yellow-orange to brown with a violin-shaped marking on the body. They hide in closets, over door frames, in basements and in corners.
- Black widow spiders are easily identified by a shiny black body with a red hourglass on the underside. They prefer dark, quiet places like garages, meter boxes or furniture.

Report a bite from one of these or any other unusual or worrisome bite to the **Poison Control Center immediately**.

Common insects that bite or sting are spiders, mosquitoes, flies, fleas, ticks, chiggers, wasps and bees. Preparation is the first line of defense against insects. Here are some tips to make outside activities more enjoyable and less painful.

- Keep all foods covered, and clean up spills immediately when picnicking to avoid attracting insects. Don't allow food to spoil in picnic areas.
- Wear light-colored clothing that fits snugly at the wrists and ankles.
- Use insect repellents sparingly. They are safest if rubbed or sprayed on clothing.
- Do not use insect repellent with DEET on children under the age of two months. Don't apply insect repellent to children's hands.
- Cover your stroller with mosquito netting, and keep your infant indoors to avoid bites.
- Don't apply insect repellent under clothing or to broken or irritated skin. Be sure to wash your hands after applying insect repellent.
- Stay away from pools of standing water, which are breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

If an insect bites or stings you, apply a topical anesthetic, hydrocortisone cream, calamine lotion or even a homemade baking soda paste to soothe the itching.

## **Petroleum products**

- Exposures to petroleum products increase as the temperature rises. These include gasoline, kerosene, motor oils, paint thinners, furniture polishes and mineral oils.
- Once ingested, they can get into the lungs, causing coughing, difficulty breathing and other respiratory problems. Sometimes they will also cause vomiting and drowsiness.
- Petroleum products are extremely dangerous. If someone ingests a petroleum product, **call the Poison Control Center immediately before doing anything else.** DO NOT try to force the person to vomit.

## **Mushrooms**

- Only an expert can tell a safe mushroom from a poisonous mushroom. Never eat a mushroom unless it has been positively identified and verified as edible.
- You can't judge a mushroom safe for eating because animals eat it or because of the area in which it grows. Edible and poisonous mushrooms can be found growing side by side in the same area.
- Mushrooms in parks, home lawns and near water dumps may be contaminated with pesticides or other poisons.
- Cooking does not make a mushroom safe to eat.
- Children are fascinated by mushrooms and will assume they are safe to eat. ALL wild mushrooms ingested by children should be considered potentially dangerous. Some species of mushrooms are capable of causing poisoning and even death.
- If your child eats a wild mushroom, **contact the Poison Control Center immediately.**
- If a child needs to go to the hospital, be prepared to take a sample of the mushroom with you for identification and analysis. Save specimens in the refrigerator; do not freeze. Place the mushroom in a paper bag, not a plastic bag.

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**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

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