

Poison Facts:

Why Babysitters Need to Know About Poisoning

Caring for children is a great job, but keeping children safe is a serious and important part of babysitting.

Poisoning is one of the most common childhood injuries. Most often, children are exposed to poisons at home. Most calls to Poison Control Centers involve children under the age of six.

Poisons can look like things that are good to eat and drink. They can come in many colors and forms including:

- Gas
- Liquid
- Solid
- Spray (aerosol)

Young children are curious. They like to put things in their mouths, especially if they look colorful or smell nice.

Some common poisons

Some poisonous products that may be found in and around the home are:

- Alcohol (rubbing)
- Batteries
- Bug and weed killers
- Cigarettes
- Cleaning agents
- Nail glue, remover and primer
- Iron pills
- Laundry products (soap, bleach)
- Lighter fluids
- Medicines
- Mouthwash
- Plants (indoor and outdoor)

How can children be kept safe from poisons?

You can help keep children safe by following these safety tips:

- Keep children where you can see them at all times, even when you go to answer the door or telephone. Never leave young children alone, even for just a minute!
- All medicines and household 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.
- Never carry something that can be poisonous, such as a medicine, in a purse where children may find it.
- Safety latches on drawers or cabinets and child-resistant caps on bottles are helpful in keeping poisons out of the hands of children. But remember, they are not “childproof” and do not take the place of your careful and constant supervision.
- 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 alone. A child may find it.

AFTER using a product, put it back in a locked cabinet. Make sure the container is closed tightly.

- If you are asked to give medicine to a child, follow the instructions on the bottle. After using the medicine, return the bottle to a safe storage place right away. Never leave a child alone with medicine.

What information about each child should you have?

Before parents leave you in charge of a child, make sure they write down some basic information such as:

- Their family doctor’s name and telephone number.
- How to reach the parents in an emergency.
- Each child’s age and weight.
- Any allergies or medical conditions.

What should you do if you think a child has been poisoned?

If you think someone has been poisoned, call the Poison Control Center immediately. Do not wait for the child to look or feel sick. The Poison Control Center will tell you what to do to help the child.

You can also call 911 or the emergency number in your city or town for help. Make sure you know the Poison Control Center's telephone number. Keep a card or sticker with your Poison Control Center's telephone number, and carry it with you on your babysitting jobs.

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

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