

Pills can be poison, too

In the wrong hands, or in the wrong dosage, pills can poison us just like cleaners or pesticides. And the same rules apply: Read the label first and follow all label instructions and warnings.

Remember:

- Medicines act differently on different people. Never take drugs prescribed for a friend or relative, even if your symptoms seem the same.

- When your doctor prescribes a new drug, make sure he or she knows about all the other medicines you are currently taking, including those prescribed by another doctor, over-the-counter medications, herbal supplements and multi-vitamins.

- Vitamins, laxatives, cold remedies, antacids, and alcohol can also lead to serious problems if used too often or in combination with certain drugs.

- Never refer to medicine as candy to get children to take it. Avoid taking medicines in front of children, since kids like to “play grown-up.” Before you give your child two medicines at the same time—over the counter OR prescription—talk to your pediatrician or pharmacist.

- Clean out your medicine cabinet and throw away old medicines. They can lose their potency over time, but can still cause harm to someone who shouldn't take them.



Poison prevention tips

- Read product and medicine labels and package inserts.
- Keep medications, household cleaners and pesticides in their original containers.
- Store products and medications out of the reach of children and pets.
- Have your heating system checked and serviced every year to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors near sleeping areas.
- Keep the number for the Minnesota Poison Control System (1-800-222-1222) by the phone.
- For animal poisonings, call your vet or the Animal Poison Hotline at 1-888-232-8870. (There is a \$35 charge.)
- Know when to call a poison control center (if you know or suspect someone has been exposed to a poison), and when to call 911 (if the person is in obvious distress: having breathing problems, hallucinations or convulsions, or is unconscious).
- Learn the proper first aid for the four main ways a person can be poisoned.



The poison control system phone number, 1-800-222-1222, has been adopted nationwide.

Prevent Poisonings



How much do I use?

Who do I call for help?



Is this safe for my child to take?

Minnesota Poison Control System

1-800-222-1222

Read the label first

- Have you ever:
- Doubled a dose of medicine when you felt really lousy?
- Doubled up on weed killer and damaged your shrubs?
- Dashed for fresh air after you mixed cleaning products together?

If you've ever used the wrong product—or the wrong amount of a product—you know that reading the label can save you time and money. More importantly, this simple step can protect you from poisoning.

Household cleaners, lawn and garden products, and medicines can harm you and those you care about if they're not used correctly. Read the label first to find out how to use the product safely and how to store it properly. Check the information provided with over-the-counter drugs and by your pharmacist for prescription medications.

Product labels may also provide phone numbers to call for help or more information.

Keep products in their original containers so there can be no mistake about the contents (and so you can refer to the label).



First Aid

Poisons can be swallowed or inhaled, or can enter your system through contact with the skin or the eyes. There are basic first aid procedures for each of these types of exposure:



Poison has been swallowed

Call a poison control center immediately for treatment advice. Remove anything remaining in the person's mouth. For chemicals or household products, have the person sip a glass of water if he or she is able to swallow. For medicines, don't give anything by mouth until you've gotten professional advice. Do not induce vomiting unless told to do so by a poison control center or doctor. Do not give anything by mouth to an unconscious person.

Poison has been inhaled

Immediately get the person to a well-ventilated area or fresh air. Avoid breathing fumes—remember that in this situation the rescuer may also be at risk. Check pulse and breathing. If the person is not breathing, call 911; then give artificial respiration, preferably mouth-to-mouth, if possible. If the person is breathing, call a poison control center for further treatment advice.

Poison on the skin

Take off contaminated clothing. Rinse the skin immediately with plenty of water for 15-20 minutes. Remember to protect yourself from touching the poison. Call a poison control center for further treatment advice.

Poison in the eyes

Gently hold the eyelids open with fingers and rinse the eyes with cool tap water for 15-20 minutes. If the person is wearing contact lenses, remove them after the first five minutes, then continue rinsing the eye. Do not let the person rub eyes. Call a poison control center for treatment advice.

Who do you call?

If you know or suspect a person has been exposed to a toxic substance, call the Minnesota Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222. **If the person is displaying obvious distress, such as breathing problems, hallucinations, convulsions or loss of consciousness, call 911.**

For animal poisonings, call your vet or the Animal Poison Hotline at 1-888-232-8870.

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