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## Poison Prevention Safety Tips

- Read product and medicine labels to find out how to use and store a product safely.
- Keep products in their original containers so there can be no mistaking the contents. Surprisingly often, products are measured into coffee cups or drink bottles.
- Keep potential poisons (including medicine, cleaning products, alcoholic beverages, perfume and petroleum products) out of sight in cabinets with child-resistant latches. Buy products with child-resistant caps, and remember that this type of cap will be more difficult, but not impossible, for a child to open. Tightly close caps after each use.
- Before answering the phone or doorbell, close containers and put them out of children's reach—or take the child with you. Never leave children or pets alone with a poisonous product.
- Always turn the lights on when taking or giving medicine. Avoid taking medicine in front of children—they mimic the behavior of adults. Never refer to medication as "candy".
- Keep plants out of reach of children. Learn which indoor and outdoor plants are poisonous (such as dieffenbachia, philodendron and pothos) and either remove them or place them out of reach of children.
- If you live in a house built before 1978, check for lead paint. Lead paint chips and dust can be hazardous if children eat or inhale them.
- Don't spray or store cleaning or pesticide products near pet food or water dishes. Make sure pets can't get at insect or rodent bait products while they are in use.
- Old medicines often stop working, but they can still be poisonous. Look for the expiration date on the bottle or tube. If it's too old to work right, or if you're not currently using it, throw it out!
- Never mix cleaning products or chemicals. Clean up after working around the house, car and garden. Properly store leftover cleaners, sprays and kerosene right away.
- Have your heating system checked and serviced every year to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Educate yourself about other causes of carbon monoxide poisoning in the home. Install carbon monoxide alarms within 10 feet of sleeping



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areas - Minnesota law requires it.

- Educate grandparents and other caregivers about the dangers of possible poisoning. Ask them to take appropriate precautions if a visit from children is expected. If visitors are expected in your home, make sure suitcases and purses are stored out of children's reach. Remind visitors to take responsibility for their own medications.
- Keep the number for the Minnesota Poison Control System (1-800-222-1222) by the phone. (The number can be found on the inside front cover of the phone book if it gets misplaced.) 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).
- Review our [First Aid for Poisoning](#) fact sheet for basic first aid procedures which may need to be used while waiting for emergency assistance or for further instructions from a poison control center.
- For animal poisonings, call your vet or the Animal Poison Hotline at 1-888-232-8870. (There is a \$35 charge.)
- Remember to take extra care at times of stress, for example: during a move, when traveling, at holiday times, when guests are visiting, etc. It's common for poisonings to occur when your regular routine is changed.

**Acknowledgments:**

[Environmental Protection Agency](#)

[Minnesota Poison Control System](#)



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