

A Poison Safety Checklist for Your Home

Potential poison hazards can be found in nearly every room of the house. Children can easily access counter tops or under-sink cabinets. The following lists suggest many of the materials commonly found in each room that should be stored on high shelves or in locked cabinets so children may not reach them.

Hazardous materials should always be stored in their original containers, which are often safety-sealed. Never place them in other containers, such as soda bottles or jars, that might lead children to think the substance is a food or beverage.

All areas of the house should be inventoried regularly to discard products that are out-dated or no longer needed.



Poison Safety Checklist

Kitchen

- ❑ Be sure that no cleaning products or dishwasher detergents are left in unlocked cabinets or on counters.
- ❑ Medicines and vitamins should be stored out of the reach of children. Refrigerated medicines should be kept in a locked box, such as a tackle box, in your refrigerator.
- ❑ Alcoholic beverages and cooking extracts that contain alcohol (such as vanilla), should not be left within the reach of children.
- ❑ Cooking oils should not be reachable by children; they can cause harm to the lungs.
- ❑ Do not keep food and poisonous products in the same cabinet.

Laundry Room

- ❑ A high shelf or lockable cabinet should be used to store soaps, detergents, bleaches, furniture polishes, drain cleaners and other cleaning supplies.
- ❑ Empty containers should be rinsed before they are discarded.

Bedrooms and Living Rooms

- ❑ Medicines and vitamins, perfumes, cosmetics and nail polish remover should not be left within the reach of children.
- ❑ Remove flaking paint on walls, woodwork or furniture.
- ❑ All plants should be kept out of the reach of children, even if you think the plant is non-poisonous.

Basement

- ❑ Routinely have the furnace professionally inspected to make sure there are no gas or carbon monoxide leaks.



- ❑ Glues, solvents, soldering compounds, caulks and other household products should be stored out of the reach of children.

Garage

- ❑ Bug sprays, weed killers, gasoline, window cleaners, antifreeze, paint, paint thinners and other solvents should be stored out of reach in the original containers.
- ❑ If solutions do need to be mixed and can't be stored in the original container, mark the new container clearly: POISONOUS.

Medicines

- ❑ Ask pharmacists for child safety caps on medications, but know they do not guarantee safety.
- ❑ Medicines should be locked up or stored on high shelves.
- ❑ Medicines should be properly disposed of if outdated, or after an illness.
- ❑ Medicines should not be stored in the bathroom – some of them may be degraded due to high humidity.
- ❑ Take the same precautions with vitamins as you do with other medications.

Safety practices to prevent accidental poisoning

- Children must be taught that they should never put anything in their mouths without adult supervision, even if they think it is food.
- Never encourage a child to take medicine by referring to it as “candy.” Avoid taking medicines in the presence of children; they like to imitate adults and may follow your example.
- Never leave a potential poison unprotected for even a second – if the phone rings, take it with you.
- Know that dangerous fumes can cause illness in children before their effects on adults may be noticeable.
- Use vaporous substances or aerosols only when there is adequate ventilation.
- When running a car's engine on long trips, in slow traffic or at a drive-in, always keep a window open.
- Mix materials such as pesticides and weed killers outdoors; keep children away from areas where they have been applied for 24 hours.
- Do not place rodent or insect baits where children can reach them. Never conceal these poisons in food.
- Buy only painted toys and crayons labeled as lead-free and use only lead-free paint on walls and other surfaces. Lead is generally a problem with older homes and toys.
- Use cabinet and drawer locks to keep poisonous products out of a child's reach.
- Do not leave a purse within a child's reach if it contains medicine or other potential poisons.
- Child-resistant packaging does not mean child proof. Do not rely on packaging to keep children out of medicines or products.

Signs of poisoning

- Stains, burns or odor on clothes or skin
- Sudden changes in behavior
- Drug or chemical containers found open or out of place
- Vomiting, dizziness, stomach pain, convulsions, unconsciousness, rapid breathing or drowsiness

What to do

- If you feel a poisoning might have occurred, do not wait for a reaction. Call the Poison Control Center immediately. They can tell you whether the ingested substance is poisonous and how to respond.
- Keep the child quiet and do not induce vomiting.
- Quickly determine what was taken and how much.
- If you are told to take the child to the hospital, take the container of the swallowed materials, its remaining contents and any vomit.

Immediate first aid

- If the child is not breathing, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and have someone call 911.
- If the child is breathing but unconscious, call 911 and stay with him or her.
- If the child is convulsing, call 911 and stay with the child. Remove sharp objects that are nearby.
- If poison was inhaled, take the child outdoors for fresh air and loosen tight clothing; open doors to air the building.
- If poison touched the skin, remove contaminated clothing, rinse the skin with water for several minutes, then wash the area with soap.
- If poison entered the eyes, flush them with lukewarm water for 15 minutes by holding the eyelid open and pouring water from the nose out toward the ears using a pitcher held about 2 inches above the eye.



- For bites from poisonous spiders, insects or snakes, call the Poison Control Center immediately.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that Ipecac Syrup no longer be used routinely as a home treatment to induce vomiting in the case of a possible poisoning. Throw out Ipecac Syrup that is currently in your home in a safe manner, such as flushing it down the toilet.



St. Louis Children's Hospital

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We're Ready for Your Call

For questions about childhood health and development, including those on poison safety, or for assistance in choosing a pediatrician, our pediatric nurses can help.

Call the St. Louis Children's Hospital Answer Line at **314.454.KIDS** (5437) or **800.678.KIDS** (5437).

Poison Control Centers:

In Missouri.....314.772.5200

Nationwide.....800.222.1222



**Poison
Safety**



This information was provided by the pharmacy and the Answer Line at St. Louis Children's Hospital.