



# Minnesota Poison Control System

[www.mnpoison.org](http://www.mnpoison.org)

## How to Prevent Poisonings in Children

### Poison Proofing

- Start early. Even before a child starts to crawl, the home needs to be "poison proof."
- Set up safe storage areas. Potential poisons should be stored in cabinets located up high, preferably with safety locks.
- All household chemicals and medicines should be stored in safe areas.
- Use child-resistant caps. If the caps no longer work, replace them.
- Keep products in their original containers. Never put poisons in other containers, especially food or beverage containers. Avoid using pill cases or plastic baggies for medication.
- Keep purses and diaper bags out of reach. They may have potentially poisonous products and medicines that are easily accessed.
- Keep alcohol drinks and mouthwash away from children.
- Keep paint in good condition. No chipping or peeling.
- Do not store food items and non-food items together.
- Do not forget to poison proof the garage.
- Provide a safe place for visitors to put their belongings while in your home.

### Medication

- Read and follow directions on the container.
- In low lighting, turn on light and read label to ensure taking or giving proper medication.
- Dispose of old medicine appropriately.
- Keep medication in the original containers.
- Do not take medication in front of children since they like to imitate adults.
- Never tell children that medicine is candy or call it candy.
- Teach children to never take medication unless you give it to them.
- Use child-resistant caps but remember child-resistant caps are NOT child proof.
- Always keep medication, including vitamins, locked up in safe storage area. Do not leave on dressers, tables, and countertops.
- About 20 percent of drug ingestions by children involve a grandparent's medication. Poison proof grandparents' home. Make sure grandma's purse is not available.
- Be careful of weekly pill minders, though they help to organize medication, most are not child-resistant.

### Plants

- Keep houseplants out of a young child's reach.
- Identify the name of all your plants, both indoors and outdoors. Label each of your plants with the correct botanical name. You can bring a sample to a plant store to get the correct name.



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- Mushrooms and berries are particularly attractive to young children. Teach your children never to put mushrooms, berries, or any part of a plant including leaves, flowers, stems, bulbs, or seeds in their mouths.
- Mushrooms are especially abundant after a rainfall. Remove mushrooms from your yard and dispose of properly after each rainfall.
- Do not assume a plant is non-poisonous because birds or wildlife eat it.
- Do not rely on cooking to destroy toxic chemicals in plants.
- Never use anything prepared from nature as a medicine or "tea."

## Buying Products

- Choose products carefully.
- Read Labels Warnings: Caution < Warning < Danger Hazards: Flammable, corrosive, explosive.
- Compare products.
- Choose products with safety closures.
- Buy least amount needed to avoid leftovers.

## When Using Products

- Use products safely. Read and follow directions, Example: Wear gloves or use in well ventilated area.
- Follow directions for storage.
- Do not mix chemicals.
- Return all products to safe storage immediately after use.
- Do not leave your child or pet alone while using a product. Poisonings happen very quickly. If the phone or doorbell rings, take the child with you.

## Be Prepared

- Have the Poison Center's phone number **1-800-222-1222** available or programmed into the telephone.
- If there is a question or a potential poisoning call the Poison Center. It's better to be safe than sorry.
- Do not wait for symptoms to appear; symptoms may often be delayed.
- Always call for help if someone may have been injured or poisoned.
- If you suspect a poisoning, call the Poison Center immediately at **1-800-222-1222**.
- Poison Information Specialists are available at the Poison Center seven days a week, 24 hours a day.