



Resident Reporter

Safe storage and use of chemicals

We use chemicals every day. They help us to live better and stay healthy. Yet, when used carelessly, even familiar chemicals can be dangerous. Each year about 200,000 accidental poisonings occur in the United States; of these, about 2,500 result in death.

Keep chemicals out of reach

Take a quick look around your home – check drawers, storage shelves, cupboards (especially those under the bathroom and kitchen sinks) and medicine cabinets. Inspect the basement, garage and all utility buildings. How many of the following products could a child reach?

- Bleach, bowl cleaner, cleaning powders, wax remover, ammonia, floor wax, etc.
- Food extracts – vanilla, almond and maple are powerful poisons if taken straight from the bottle undiluted.
- Varnish, paints, paint thinners and paint removers.
- Fuels such as kerosene, charcoal lighter and gasoline.
- Pesticides such as weed killers, insect sprays, mothballs and rat poison.
- Aspirin, vitamins, sleeping pills and other medicines.
- Antiseptics such as iodine.

Every one of these products can cause serious illness and even death, and children are usually the victims.

Always store these products where children cannot reach them.

Pesticide application

The most important rule to follow when using pesticides and other dangerous chemicals is to read the label. Read it before you buy the product, before you open the container, before you mix it, before you apply it and before you get rid of any unused portions or the empty container. *Know and follow all of the instructions and precautions.*

Labels

Labels on most household chemicals will contain important information on use and storage. Some chemical labels (pesticides, cleaning products, etc.) will also contain precautionary information on chemical hazards (toxicity, flammability, etc.) and emergency first aid information. But labels are effective only if applicators read them and follow the warnings.



First aid measures for poisoning

Should a poisoning occur, quick and calm action is extremely important. Poison control centers that are located in various cities of the state handle emergency poisoning telephone calls. Check your telephone directory for the nearest Poison Control Center.



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To assist in case of a poisoning, post the following list of phone numbers inside your medicine cabinet door and near your telephone.

Follow these steps in case of poisoning

1. First, dilute the poison whenever possible. Give the victim a glass of water.
2. Call the Poison Control Center, doctor or hospital promptly! Since the doctor must know what chemicals are in the poison, have this information available (if possible) before calling.
3. If so directed on the label, make the patient vomit.

Do not make the patient vomit if:

- He or she is unconscious or is having seizures.
 - Swallowed poison was a strong corrosive.
 - Swallowed poison contained kerosene, gasoline or other petroleum distillates (unless it contains dangerous insecticide as well, which must be removed).
4. To induce vomiting:
 - Give syrup of ipecac: Children, 20 ml (4 teaspoons); adults, 30 ml (2 tablespoons); taken with at least two to three glasses of water. **Do not** use carbonated beverages with syrup of ipecac. If vomiting does not occur after using syrup of ipecac (approximately 20 minutes, depending on distance to the emergency room), the victim's stomach must be pumped because the syrup of ipecac has been absorbed and will interfere with heart action.
 - Do not waste time waiting for vomiting; transport the patient to a medical facility. Call for help promptly — be sure to keep one ounce of syrup of ipecac in your home.

If the victim has collapsed or is not breathing, call 911.

Checklist for poison proofing your home

How poison proof is your home? Use the following checklist to evaluate.

Kitchen

- No household products under the sink.
- No medicines on counters or in open areas such as on top of the refrigerator or window sills.
- All cleaners, household products and medications out of reach.

Bathroom

- Medicine chest cleaned out regularly.
- Old medications thrown out.
- All medicines in original, safety top containers.
- All medicines, sprays, powders, cosmetics, fingernail preparations, hair care products, etc. out of reach.

Bedroom

- No medicines in or on dresser or bedside table.
- All perfumes, cosmetics, powders and sachets out of reach.

Laundry area

- All bleaches, soaps, detergents, fabric softeners, bluing agents and sprays out of reach.
- All of the above in original containers.
- All cleaners out of reach.

General household

- Alcoholic beverages out of reach.
- Ashtrays empty or out of reach.
- Plants out of reach.
- Paint in good repair.
- Household and personal products out of reach.

These recommendations were provided by the American Association of Poison Control Centers, www.aapcc.org

If you have a poisoning emergency, call 1-800-222-1222
If the victim has collapsed or is not breathing, call 911