
Poison Prevention Starts at Home

Each year, more than 90 percent of poisoning exposures handled by the Illinois Poison Center (IPC) occur in the home. The most frequent causes of poisonings are common household products, such as cleansers, pain medicines, and health and beauty products. Most poisonings are accidental and can be prevented by taking a few moments to make your home a safer place.

Go through your home and correct any potential poisoning hazards by following the steps below. A little time spent now could avoid an emergency later.

Home Safety Tips

Bedrooms:

- Keep all perfumes, colognes, cosmetics and contraceptives out of children's reach.
- Do not leave medications out on the nightstand or within the reach of children.

Kitchen:

- Remove household products from under the sink or anywhere children can reach them.
- Do not keep medications out on the counter.

Garage and Yard:

- Keep the following items in safety containers and out of children's reach: gasoline, oil, antifreeze, charcoal lighter fluids, paint and thinners, and insect and weed killers.
- Do not put gasoline or paint thinner in other jars or bottles. Keep them in the original containers. Do not siphon gasoline by mouth.
- Identify all flowers, bushes and trees in and around your home.

Bathroom:

- The IPC has created NEW Guidelines for disposing of expired or unused medications.
- Keep all your medications in child-resistant containers and out of children's reach.
- Keep all bathroom and toilet cleansers locked up. Health and beauty aids should always be kept out of children's reach.
- Always keep drain cleaners in safety containers and out of children's reach.
- Do not take or give medicines in the dark.

Laundry Room:

- Keep soaps, detergents, bleaches and diaper pail deodorizers out of children's reach.
- Rinse out all empty bleach and fabric softener bottles before discarding.

Living Room:

- Inspect all walls and windows for peeling paint, which may contain lead.
- Identify all plants and remove those that are toxic.
- Empty ashtrays and keep tobacco, lighters and matches out of children's reach.
- Keep liquor locked up and alcoholic drinks out of children's reach.

More Home Safety Tips:

- Keep all products (cleansers, cosmetics, medicines, and items used for home repair, gardening and automobiles) in their original containers with original labels.
- Store poisonous products in cabinets with child-resistant safety locks.
- Always read the labels and directions for use each time you use cleaning products, medicines and other potential poisons.
- Never call medicine candy or make a game out of taking it.

If you suspect a poisoning has occurred, don't wait for symptoms to appear – call the IPC immediately. Be prepared by posting the IPC number (1-800-222-1222) on each phone. The IPC provides free, confidential advice on poison prevention and treatment, 24 hours a day at 1-800-222-1222.

