



Home Safety

Approximately 55 percent of calls handled by the Illinois Poison Center (IPC) are calls involving children age 5 and under being exposed to a poison. That means parents need to take extra precautions to safeguard against accidental poisonings. Take a moment to read through this handout to find out how to keep your family safe from poisons.

Medication Safety

All parents must use extra care when giving their children medicine. Some people may confuse *tbsp* (tablespoon) with *tsp* (teaspoon) when measuring doses. The IPC recommends using the measuring device that comes with the medicine or one that shows exact amounts. Double-check the meaning of commonly used abbreviations. Here are a few more tips on medication safety:



- Keep all medications in child-resistant containers and up high, out of children's reach.
- Always turn the light on when taking or giving medicine.
- Never give a child someone else's prescription medication.
- Never give more than the number of pills prescribed.
- Never mix medicines unless directed by your doctor. Some medicines, when mixed together, can lead to serious side effects or drug interactions.
- Properly dispose of old medicines by flushing them down the toilet, rinsing the containers and then throwing the empty containers away. This is very important for those with young children, or pets, at home.

The IPC is Here to Help

The IPC is the only certified, regional poison center in the state, serving all of Illinois 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Staffed by nurses, physicians, pharmacists and other poison specialists, the IPC provides free, confidential poison prevention advice and treatment recommendations to the public and health care professionals via a national, toll-free hot line, 1-800-222-1222. The IPC answers calls on household products, alcohol or drug misuse, herbal products, medication overdoses, adverse reactions to medications, venomous bites and other poisonings.



The IPC is a program of the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council, an association of more than 140 hospitals and health care organizations working together to improve the quality of health care services in the Chicago area.



Garage and Yard Safety

Poisons in the Garage

The garage is full of chemicals and other products that can be very dangerous if misused, or ingested accidentally. Many potentially dangerous products can be confused with other less harmful ones. For example, a child can easily confuse windshield wiper fluid with Kool-Aid® or Gatorade®. So make sure the following products are kept in their original containers with their original labels, and stored out of children's reach:



- Automotive products
 - Gasoline, oil, antifreeze, windshield wiper fluid, etc.
- Pool Chemicals
 - Chlorine, bromines, shock treatments, etc.
- Lawn care products
 - Insect and weed killers, fertilizers, mulch, etc.
- Charcoal lighter fluids, paint and paint thinners



Be sure to put these products away immediately after use. Children act fast and so do poisons.

Prevent a Pesticide Poisoning

- Always store pesticides in the original containers, complete with labels that list ingredients, directions for use and first-aid steps in case of an accidental poisoning.
- Read the directions on each container because every chemical is different.
- Wear protective clothing when applying pesticides (gloves, glasses, long sleeves and pants).
- Never apply pesticides outdoors on a windy day. Position yourself so that the wind will not blow pesticide spray or dust into your face.
- Keep children away during application and until the product dries, or as directed on the label.
- Dispose of the remaining pesticide as directed and rinse out the empty container.
- Wipe down any household or garden tools that may have been exposed to the pesticide.
- Wash your hands with soap and change your clothes after applying a pesticide.



Poisons in the Yard

Potential poisons can be lurking on and around your yard. Here are some tips to help keep your family safe:

- Identify all plants in your yard by common and botanical names. Consult your local greenhouse, nursery or florist to identify unknown plants. Mark the ones that are poisonous.
- Tell children to keep away from any mushrooms, plants and berries growing outside.
- Have children wash their hands thoroughly after playing in the grass.
- Keep children and pets off of the yard when fertilizing or applying insect or weed killers until the product dries, or as directed on the label.



NEVER SIPHON GASOLINE OR ANY OTHER TOXIC SUBSTANCE BY MOUTH!