Stop using syrup of ipecac and activated charcoal at home! Instead, call the poison center immediately at 1-800-222-1222 when a potential poisoning case occurs.

This updated recommendation followed the announcement made by American Academy of Pediatrics in November 2003.

**History**

Syrup of ipecac is used to make a person vomit. In-home use of ipecac syrup had been recommended since the 1960s to treat poisoning cases on-site. This was done to eliminate the need to take the victim to a hospital or, in more serious poisoning cases, to begin emptying the stomach contents as quickly as possible.

**Why shouldn't we use syrup of ipecac anymore?**

Current available medical studies neither support nor refute use of ipecac syrup. Also, poison center data revealed that giving ipecac syrup to a poisoning victim did not have an effect on a patient's outcome and it did not reduce the number of people going to a hospital.

Most importantly, its administration at home could actually hinder medical care in the hospital setting, potentially making it more difficult for the patient to keep down activated charcoal or other treatment therapies.

**What about activated charcoal?**

Similar lack of clinical-based evidence related to activated charcoal, a substance that binds with the poison in the stomach to eliminate it naturally. Therefore, the IPC also urges people not to use this drug therapy in the home either.

**At-Home Day Care Centers** — Amended rules from the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services deleted the requirement of having in the home's first aid kit syrup of ipecac and activated charcoal as of November 14, 2005.

Questions or comments regarding the use of syrup of ipecac or activated charcoal, including the safe use of these drug therapies in a health care facility, may be directed to the IPC at 1-800-222-1222.