

Health Tips

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with

Dr. D



Printer Friendly

Health Tip: Poisoning Prevention

According to the Poison Prevention Week Council, every 30 seconds, a U.S. poison control center receives a call about an unintended poisoning. This amounts to more than 2 million poisonings being reported each year to one of the Poison Control Centers across the country. The vast majority of these poisonings occur in the home, primarily in children under six years of age. But adults are not immune to the problem either. Poisoning, particularly due to overdoses of over-the-counter and illicit drugs, has become the nation's second leading cause of accidental death, trailing only motor vehicle accidents.



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The following recommendations have been provided by www.PoisonPrevention.org to help prevent poisonings:

1. Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container securely after use.
2. Keep all chemicals and medicines locked up and out of sight.
3. When products are in use, never let young children out of your sight, even if you must take the child or product along when answering the phone or doorbell.
4. Keep items in original containers.
5. Leave the original labels on all products and read the label before using.
6. Do not put decorative lamps and candles that contain lamp oil where children can reach them because lamp oil is very toxic.
7. Always leave the light on when giving or taking medicine. Check the dosage every time.

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8. Avoid taking medicine in front of children. Refer to medicine as "medicine," not "candy."
9. Clean out the medicine cabinet periodically, and safely dispose of unneeded medicines when the illness for which they were prescribed is over.

The traditional recommendations for disposing of drugs have included flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash; neither is a good idea.

Scientists have found prescription drug contamination in streams, rivers, and lakes all over the country, and drugs in the trash may be found and taken by children. The Harvard HEALTHbeat newsletter offers these suggestions for properly disposing of unused or out of date drugs: 1) Ask your pharmacist if he or she can take back medications; 2) Call your city or state to ask about disposal programs; 3) If you must put your medications in the trash, keep them in their original childproof and waterproof containers with the label on (scratch out your name for privacy protection), add water to pills or put flour in liquids, then conceal the vials by putting them in empty margarine containers or paper bags before throwing them out.



Across the United States, there are 64 Regional Poison Controls Centers. These centers provide information to both medical professionals as well as to the public regarding the latest treatment for the ingestion of household products and medicines. If there is a concern regarding someone being poisoned from a medication or a household product, call 1-800-222-1222, and you will be connected to a Poison Control Center. This service is available 24 hrs-a-day, 7 days-a-week free of charge. The Poison Control Center staff can provide information about the toxicity of medications or household products, offer first-aid advice and provide recommendations regarding follow-up care. For more information on accidental poisoning, go to www.PoisonPrevention.org or to the [National Safety Council](http://www.NationalSafetyCouncil.org) website.



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