

Over two million

Poison exposures reported to local poison centers in 2000

89%

Percent of all poison exposures that occur in the home

14 seconds

Average frequency poison centers handle a poison exposure

92%

Percentage of exposures that involve only one poisonous substance

53%

Percentage of poison exposures that occur in children under the age of six

160,000

Cases of poison exposure reported among teenagers in 2000

84%

Percentage of reported adolescent deaths from poison exposure that were due to intentional poison exposure such as suicide or drug abuse

Over 8,000

Poison exposures in 2000 that occurred in pregnant women

77%

Percentage of all exposures that are treated on the site where they occurred, generally the patient's home with phone advice and assistance from local poison control experts

86.7%

Percentage of poison exposures that are unintentional

From the 2000 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers

Safety Sounds

A Monthly Safety Bulletin From SPSG Schools Group

March 16th – 22nd

National Poison Prevention Week

This year's theme is "Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons!" This means that parents must always be watchful when household chemicals or drugs are being used. Many incidents happen when adults are using a product but are distracted for a few moments. Children act fast, and adults must make sure that chemicals and medicines are stored away from children at all times.

Never refer to medicine or vitamins as candy. Referring to medicine as candy could cause a child to think that it is harmless or pleasant to eat. Since children tend to mimic adults, avoid taking medications in front of them. Vitamins, particularly those containing iron, can also be poisonous to children.

Post the national toll-free National Poison Control Center hotline number. 1-800-222-1222.

Keep ipecac syrup on hand, and use it only at the advice of a poison control center.

Accidental Poisoning

If you suspect a child has swallowed something, check his or her mouth. Remove any remaining poison from the child's mouth, then call your local poison control center. When calling, bring the container of the ingested substance to the phone with you. Call even if you are not sure that the child was poisoned. The poison center staff or emergency personnel will determine if you need to do anything for the child.

*From National Safe Kids Campaign
www.safekids.org
and www.poisonprevention.org*

Poison Prevention

Curiosity is a natural stage of a child's development, but it also puts children at greater risk of unintentional poisoning. In 2001 more than 1.1 million such poisonings among children ages 5 and under were reported to U.S. poison control centers. In 2000, 91 children ages 14 and under died from poisoning incidents. Although household and industrial cleaners are a frequent cause of poisoning, kids can also be fatally poisoned by iron, alcohol and carbon monoxide.

Child-resistant packaging, product reformulation and interventions by poison control centers and health professionals all helped reduce the childhood poison-related death rate 38 percent from 1987 to 1998. By reducing the opportunity for poisonings and knowing how to keep innocent mistakes from turning into tragedies, you can help that number decline even further.

Poison Prevention Tips

Stay alert while using poisonous products. Many poisonings occur while adults are using a household product like a bathroom cleaner or bleach. Adults should know where children are when these products are in use and never leave a child alone with a poisonous product. It takes only seconds for a poisoning to occur. Keep poisonous products out of reach. In schools, potentially harmful products must be stored in locked custodial closets and should never be left unattended in hallways or classrooms.

Don't create new cleaning solutions by mixing different products designed for other uses. The new mixtures may be harmful to children and may not be stored in properly labeled or child-resistant containers.

Keep poisonous plants out of reach. Learn which plants in and around your school are poisonous, and either remove them or make them inaccessible to children. Teach children never to put leaves, stems, bark, seeds, nuts or berries from any plant into their mouths.

Beware of certain cosmetics and personal products. Children may be tempted to taste medicines, cosmetics and personal care products. Store items such as pills, after-shave, cologne, perfume, hair spray, shampoo, artificial fingernail remover and fingernail polish remover out of reach.