

Poison Proof Your Home



CHALLENGE
Poison proof
your home this
month.

Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Learn the risks" and "Poison Prevention Checklist."
2. To complete the Challenge, you must be able to answer "yes" to each poison prevention question. Use your monthly Health Challenge™ Calendar to keep track.
3. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

Learn the risks

Unintentional poisoning is second only to motor vehicle crashes as a leading cause of unintentional injury death in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A poison is any substance that can cause sickness or death when swallowed, breathed, touched, or splashed in the eye or on the skin. It could be useful in small amounts. For example, medicine when taken as prescribed can keep you well. Cosmetics or other personal care products can help you look beautiful. Gasoline is fuel for automobiles and lawnmowers. Yet each of these items – and many others – can become deadly if misused.

A call is made to a poison center every 8 seconds – totaling more than 4.2 million calls annually. While many of these calls were information requests, more than half were about incidents of human exposure to poison. The majority of those incidents (92%) occurred in the home.¹

The substances most frequently involved in all human poisonings were analgesics – commonly known as painkillers. Over-the-counter medications are good for many types of pain and include acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs, such as aspirin).

Acetaminophen overdose is one of the most common poisonings worldwide, according to the National Institutes of Health. It is included in a number of pain, cold, and flu medicines. People often think that acetaminophen is safe. However, it can lead to liver failure and death if taken in large doses. Adults should take no more than 4,000 mg of acetaminophen a day. If treatment is received within 8 hours of the overdose, there is a good chance of recovery. Yet symptoms may not occur until 12 or more hours after the acetaminophen was swallowed. Never leave medicines where a child could find them.



You might think to keep adult medicine out of a child's reach, but you should also secure children's pills. The most common cause of childhood deaths from poisoning is vitamin pills with iron. Putting a vitamin bottle away in an upper cabinet is not sufficient. Children can climb and can easily open child-resistant caps. A child can die after swallowing as few as 5 of these pills.

The second-most common cause of home poisonings is personal care items. These products are the ones that children under age 6 are most commonly exposed to. Keep hair sprays, nail polish, toothpaste, lotions, cosmetics, and all other personal care items in a child-safe cabinet or storage container.

Your house is a smorgasbord of poisons – from kitchen to bathroom to garage to yard, and everything between:

- ◆ Cleaning supplies, such as dishwasher detergent, bleach, and ammonia
- ◆ Food products that have spoiled
- ◆ Alcohol, such as beer and wine, and products containing alcohol, such as mouthwash, aftershave, and colognes
- ◆ Gasoline, kerosene, paint thinners, antifreeze, and windshield washing fluid
- ◆ Pesticides
- ◆ Wasps, spiders, and other stinging and biting bugs
- ◆ Art and office supplies
- ◆ Fumes and vapors, such as carbon dioxide and radon
- ◆ Plants



Never leave poisonous products unattended when using them. Always keep potentially poisonous products in their original containers and store exactly according to the product instructions – and in a locked storage area. Keep a copy of the safety and first-aid instructions in a file if there is a risk the label might become lost or unreadable.

Plants can be poisonous

Pets are not exempt from becoming poisoned. Data from the American Association of Poison Control Centers indicate that more than 118,000 dogs and nearly 12,000 cats are exposed to poisonous substances each year.

You know about the “Big 3” poisonous plants: poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. These plants cause blistering rashes, itch, and pain. Your pet might be immune, but can transfer the oils from these plants to you.

Many other plants typically considered safe – and widely planted for their beauty – can be toxic if eaten. Outdoor plants including foxglove, laurel, azalea, rhododendron, mistletoe, wisteria, holly berries, castor beans, hyacinths, daffodils, clematis, periwinkle, Virginia creeper, jasmine, and yew might cause vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, kidney damage, or death. Many indoor plants – including dieffenbachia and philodendron – are also poisonous if eaten.

If you have small children or curious pets, consider removing toxic plants from your garden and house. At the very least, place house plants out of the reach of young children and pets. Label plants with both the common and botanical name in case of accidental ingestion.

Use protective gloves and clothing when handling plants that may be irritating to the skin, and wash clothes afterwards. Also, do not eat plants or mushrooms collected outdoors, unless you are certain that they are safe. Don't suck nectar from flowers or make “tea” from the leaves.



Foxglove



Poison ivy



Poison oak



“Destroying Angel”
(*Amanita virosa*)



Amanita muscaria



Dieffenbachia

In an emergency...

1. **Put the poison control number –**
1-800-222-1222 – on or near every home telephone and save it on your cell phone. The line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
2. **If a poisoning occurs...**
 - ✓ Remain calm.
 - ✓ Call for help:
Dial 911 if you have a poison emergency and the victim has collapsed or is not breathing.
3. **If the victim is awake and alert...**
 - ✓ Dial 1-800-222-1222.
 - ✓ Be prepared to provide, if possible, the:
 - Victim's age and weight
 - Type of poison to which the person was exposed
 - Container or bottle of the poison
 - Time of the poison exposure
 - Address where the poisoning occurred
4. **Stay on the phone and follow the instructions** from the emergency operator or poison control center.

For more poison control information, see: www.aapcc.org/DNN

Call 1-800-222-1222 first. The National Poison Data System (NPDS) reports that healthcare professionals consult poison center experts 1,400 times a day for treatment recommendations for their patients.

In addition, calling a poison center is much faster and cheaper than calling an ambulance and going to the emergency room. Each \$3 spent on poison center services saves almost \$290 in medical spending.² Nearly 90% of poison emergencies are successfully managed over the telephone. If you do need hands-on care, the poison center will call an ambulance for you, give treatment advice to the ambulance crew, then call the emergency department so they're ready for your arrival.

More →

Learn how to use household cleaning products effectively and safely:
<http://cleaning101.com/health/SafeClean9-18-04.pdf>

Top 25 Substances Involved in Poisoning

Substance	# of annual incidents in the U.S	%*
Analgesics (pain pills)	309,431	12.5
Cosmetics/personal care products	225,410	9.1
Cleaning substances (household)	216,228	8.7
Sedative/hypnotics/antipsychotics	154,602	6.2
Foreign bodies/toys/miscellaneous	127,777	5.1
Topical preparations	111,634	4.5
Cold and cough preparations	111,222	4.5
Antidepressants	98,898	4.0
Pesticides	96,307	3.9
Cardiovascular drugs	86,122	3.5
Alcohol	82,432	3.3
Antihistamines	79,157	3.2
Food products/food poisoning	78,102	3.1
Venom poison (from spider and bug bites)	77,325	3.1
Antimicrobials	67,445	2.7
Vitamins	66,189	2.7
Plants	60,514	2.4
Hormones and hormone antagonists**	54,613	2.2
Gastrointestinal preparations	54,428	2.2
Hydrocarbons	48,497	2.0
Chemicals	48,400	2.0
Stimulants and street drugs	46,143	1.9
Anticonvulsants	43,080	1.7
Arts/crafts/office supplies	40,140	1.6
Fumes/gases/vapors	40,017	1.6

Frequency of exposure may reflect availability of the substance.

* Percentages are based on the total number of human exposures (2,482,041) rather than the total number of substances.

** Chemical substances that inhibit the function of hormones.

Source: 2007 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System (NPDS): 25th Annual Report.

References:

1. 2007 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System (NPDS): 25th Annual Report.
2. Pacific Institute of Research and Evaluation. *Injury Prevention: What Works? A Summary of Cost-Outcome Analysis for Injury Prevention Programs. Fact Sheets. Nov. 28, 2005.*

Poison Prevention Check List

- Have you posted the National Poison Control Hotline number (1-800-222-1222) along with other emergency numbers next to every phone in your home?
- Are your first-aid kits stocked with charcoal capsules?
- Are caustic items (products that can burn your skin such as oven cleaners and rust remover) as well as all potential poisons kept in their original and labeled containers?
- Do dangerous products – including cleaning products, medications, and chemicals – have child-resistant caps, and are they kept away from food?
- Have you installed child safety locks on cabinets where hazardous products and medications are stored (if you have young children in your home)?
- Are dangerous household items such as medicines, toxic bleaches, oven and drain cleaners, paint solvents, polishes, and waxes stored safely in a locked cabinet and out of reach of children?
- Have you properly disposed of unidentified and out-of-date medicines? (Find out how at: www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/drug_disposal062308.pdf)
- Are medicines kept in their original containers with the original labels?
- Do you keep track of medication doses and always follow your doctor's instructions?
- Do you lock up all outside chemicals, especially pesticides, fertilizers, and automotive fluids?
- Have you installed a UL-listed carbon monoxide (CO) alarm in the hallway near bedrooms in your home?
- Do you always use kerosene and gas heaters with ventilation (such as an open window) and only re-fuel a heater outdoors after it has cooled?
- Do you always pull the car out of the garage after starting it?
- Are you careful to only use gasoline as a motor fuel and to never bring gasoline indoors, even in small amounts?
- Are you careful to never use a barbecue grill or generator in your garage?
- Have you removed toxic plants from your garden and house (if there are pets or children in your home)?



Poison Proof Your Home

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. At the end of the month, you must be able to answer "yes" to each poison prevention question on page 3. Keep your home poison-proofed for a lifetime of good health and wellbeing.
3. Turn in your Health Challenge™ form if requested, or enter your completion of this Challenge on the Health Activity Tracker report for the month, if applicable. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

CHALLENGE
Poison proof your home this month.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
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_____ I poison proofed my home

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

