

Poisoning

Keep Your Child Safe!

Poisoning is one of the most common childhood injuries. **Most of these “accidents” are completely preventable.**

Toddlers and preschoolers are the age groups most likely to be poisoned. Why? Children at this age are curious, quick, and explore everything in their world without fear—often by tasting. They like to imitate what they see grownups doing, like getting things out of high cabinets, using spray cleaners and taking medicines.

Here’s how to keep small children safe from poisoning:

Store all chemicals and medicines separately, and safely. These should be kept in a locked cabinet. Just putting them “up high” is not safe enough, since most children older than about 18 months can climb very well. Don’t leave cosmetics, cleaners, vitamins or cigarettes within reach.

Don’t leave a container out for “just a minute”. Many poisonings happen when an adult using a product is interrupted, such as leaving it to go answer the phone or doorbell. A small child will take advantage of the lack of attention, and have the container opened when the adult returns!

Child-proof caps aren’t. The caps on many medicines and chemicals are “**child resistant**”. None of them are child-proof. It will take a child longer to remove these lids... but they *will* get opened. Don’t rely on the cap alone to keep out a curious child.

Know what to do in case of a poisoning. Don’t waste precious time on old-fashioned treatments like milk or sticking fingers into the throat. Don’t wait to see if sickness occurs—many poisons do damage that can’t be seen right away. **Calling the Virginia Poison Center is always the correct action** to take if someone’s been exposed to a poison or medicine. Put stickers with the poison center’s emergency number on your telephones. Make sure that grandparents and babysitters also have the number posted. Throughout Virginia, the number is **1-800-222-1222**.

Activated charcoal. This is sometimes used as treatment for poisonings. It can be bought at the pharmacy without a prescription. Keep it in your first aid kit. You should NEVER give activated charcoal UNLESS the poison center tells you to do so!!

This fact sheet is a service of the Virginia Poison Center in Richmond, Virginia. For more information on poison prevention, please visit our website www.vapoison.org or contact us at:



Virginia Poison Center
Business: 804-828-4780
Toll Free Emergency: 1-800-222-1222
In Richmond: 804-828-9123

