



# TIPS

## Keeping children safe at home: Poisoning

### Protect your child from poisoning

Children are curious and like to put everything in their mouths. They may try to eat or drink almost anything. Children like attractive packaging, bright colours and good smells and are drawn to many of the products found around the home. In fact, more than 90% of all poisonings occur in the home.

Young children's curiosity puts them at high risk for poisoning. Children five years and under are more likely to be accidentally poisoned than children in other age groups.

Children suffer more serious effects of poisoning than adults do because they are smaller, have faster metabolic rates, and their bodies are less able to deal with toxic chemicals.

There are many simple changes you can make in your home to prevent a poisoning. Preventing bullying among children and youth.

### Keeping your child safe

- Store poisons carefully (see the list of common household poisons below).
  - Store household cleaners, chemicals, medications and any item marked as poisonous in a locked storage cabinet or use child protective products to lock the cupboards and drawers. When you are using cleaners and chemicals, keep the lids on the containers. Keep cigarettes and cigarette butts out of your child's reach.
  - Always store chemicals in their original containers. Never store a chemical in a food container or an unmarked container.
  - Read labels and find out which of your household products or plants are poisonous. If you are not sure about something, keep it where children can't reach it.

Here are some common household poisons to watch out for:

**Pills, medicine:** Aspirin and other pain or cold medications, prescription medicines, vitamins, diet pills, and diet supplements.

**Bathroom:** Cleaners, sprays, perfume, cologne, hairspray, and mouthwash.

**Household products:** Cleaners, polishes, solvents, and products with lye and acids. Lamp oil.

**Garage, work room:** Insect sprays, kerosene, lighter fluid, turpentine, paint, glue, batteries, tyre fluid and antifreeze.

**Laundry room:** Detergents, bleach, fabric softeners, and pet products.

**Outdoors:** Fertilizers, pesticides, plants, mushrooms and berries.

- Throw away old medicines and cleaning products.
- Don't take medicine in front of children. They may try to copy you.
- Whenever possible, buy products in child resistant containers. Always put the cap back on medication containers. Do not rely on child resistant containers alone to keep your children safe, though. It is still important to keep these poisons out of reach and supervise your children.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector with an alarm in your home.
- Every year, have a specialist check your gas installation and appliances such as your cooker and water heater. Also have your chimney checked and cleaned annually.
- Know the telephone number of your nearest poison control centre or emergency service. Keep it by the telephone.

### What to do in an emergency

- If you suspect poisoning, do not let your child drink anything.
- Do not try to make the child sick as this can cause even more damage to a young child's delicate insides.
- Call your nearest poison control centre or emergency service and follow their directions.
- If you know what poison your child has taken, keep a sample to show to the doctor to help him or her decide on the best course of treatment.
- Take a basic first aid course for more information about how to deal with an emergency.

*Adapted from "The Scottish Good Egg Guide to keeping your child safe at home" with permission from Dynamic Advertising Group.*

*(printed October 2009)*