

Preventing Pediatric Poisonings

According to (AAPCC) American Association of Poison Control Centers, Poisonings are the leading cause of injury death in the US. In the 35th Annual report Of AAPCC it is stated that 2.6 million potentially dangerous exposures were managed over the telephone in 2017.

Approximately 45% (999,529) of the calls to Poison Control Centers were in reference to children less than 6 years of age. Cosmetics and personal care products were number one in this age group for exposure. Household cleaners, analgesics, foreign bodies (toys), topical ointments and creams, antihistamines, vitamins, pesticides, dietary supplements and herbals, homeopathic substances and plants all were included in the cause for poisonings in this age group. In older groups of children, the list remains the same as for the <6 group although analgesics (pain relievers) take lead in poison exposures among older children age 6-12. In the teen population 13 to 19 years of age the list included antidepressants, sedatives, stimulants, street drugs, anticonvulsants, cardiovascular medications.

Poisonings can occur at any time or in any place. The most common place for poisonings to occur is in the home or the home of relatives. Many commonplace household items can be poisonous to children such as aspirin, dishwasher detergents, clothes detergents, home cleaners.

Poison prevention is the key to protecting the health of children against these occurrences. Examples of poison prevention include...Keeping all household products and medications locked up and out of sight and reach. Do not turn your back on a child while you are using chemicals. In an instant a child can grab up a chemical and ingest it or pour it on themselves. Never leave a child unsupervised where chemicals or medications are in reach. Use childproof locking mechanisms on cabinets and drawers. Never store poisonous products in the same place that you store food. Be vigilant when giving medication to a child that you are administering the right medication in the right dose. Avoid taking medications in front of children and do not give conflicting information about medications ie... “this is candy” in order to get a child to take their medication.

Outside the home know the plants growing around you. Identify those which may be poisonous to persons and animals. Pesticides can absorb into the skin and become extremely toxic to persons. Keep children away from areas that have been sprayed. Keep product label sheets on the products you are using as well as the safety information provided with the container.

If a poisoning occurs call the Poison Help Hotline. **1-800-222-1222**. You will be asked important information needed in caring for the individual. If necessary, you will be advised to go to the nearest Emergency room. In the best-case scenario, you may be instructed to care for the individual at home. Either way the hotline will be able to share information with you or the hospital when a poisoning occurs.

Always keep the Poison Help Hotline available on your phone and posted in your home and workplace so it is there when you need it. Always take time to teach children about Poisonous substances. As the proverb goes...An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

From www.poisoncontrol.org, Texas Poison Network and American Association of Poison control Centers

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