



accidental poisoning

Many people are not aware of the hundreds of potential poisons in their homes. We tend to think that the only products which could harm are those which are specifically labeled "Poison". It is the misuse of any household product, medication, or plant which makes it a potential poison.

VICTIMS

Children under the age of five are the main victims. Little children do not read labels but they are curious by nature and like to explore.

TYPES

Medications of any type may be harmful to a small child if taken in sufficient quantity. Handle all medicines as if they were poison. Poisonous plants are found in many homes and gardens. Eating parts of these plants can be harmful and young children are often the victims. Hazardous products include a wide variety of household cleaners and other working materials such as kerosene, floor waxes, furniture polish, laundry pre-soak, paint cleaners, pesticides, and insecticides. By law their labels must carry symbols and words to warn you of potential dangers. Store these products out of reach of potential victims – not under the kitchen sink. Poisonings can also occur while using a product. If you are interrupted while you are using the product, either take it with you or put it away in a secure location.

PREVENTION

Avoid the purchase of any hazardous substances that are not essential. Storage of potentially hazardous substances out of reach of children could prevent many poisonings. Preferably, those products should be locked up or kept in a cabinet with a child protection latch. Products should always be kept in their original containers – never in cups or soft-drink bottles. Discard any old medicines by cleaning out the medicine chest periodically. Dispose of them by taking them to your local pharmacy. Use products carefully. Read labels thoroughly before use and follow the directions carefully.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If in spite of all precautions a poisoning occurs, prompt action is essential. Remove child from the source of poisoning. Call the

POISON CONTROL CENTRE nearest to you and your physician or a hospital emergency department immediately for help. Be prepared to supply the following information:

- Age of victim & estimated body weight
- Kind and amount of poison. Try to locate the container and estimate the amount consumed from what remains in the container.
- Symptoms - describe the victims appearance and general condition.
- When poison was ingested.

TREATMENT

There are certain things that can be done at home to reduce the severity of the poisoning. However, always check for advice before proceeding. For more information contact your local Poison Control Centre.

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