



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Poison Prevention Tips Offered by AAP and the Vermont Department of Health

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BURLINGTON – Most poisonings occur when parents or caregivers are home but not paying attention. During National Poison Prevention Week, March 17 – 23 the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Vermont Department of Health are offering important tips to poison proof your home.

A total of 12,725 poisoning calls from Vermont were handled by the New England Poison Center last year. Medications and pharmaceuticals accounted for 43 percent of the 5,066 poisonings reported statewide in 2012. Pain relief medications accounted for 11 percent of poisonings.

“Medications left within reach of a child are the primary reason poisonings occur, which is tragic because this is entirely preventable when parents and caregivers are vigilant and make certain that all medications are completely inaccessible, safely locked away and out of reach,” said Breena Holmes, MD, director of Maternal and Child Health.

The most dangerous potential poisons are medicines, cleaning products, antifreeze, windshield wiper fluid, pesticides, furniture polish, gasoline, kerosene and lamp oil. Holidays, visits to grandparents’ homes, and other special events may bring greater risk of poisoning if the usual safeguards are not in place.

### To poison proof your home:

- Store medicine, cleaning and laundry products, paints/varnishes and pesticides in their original packaging in locked cabinets or containers, out of sight and reach of children.
- Install a safety latch – that locks when you close the door – on child-accessible cabinets containing harmful products.
- Purchase and keep all medicines in containers with safety caps and keep out of reach of children. Discard unused medication.
- Never refer to medicine as “candy” or another appealing name.
- Check the label each time you give a child medicine to ensure proper dosage. For liquid medicines, use the dosing device that came with the medicine.
- Never place poisonous products in food or drink containers.
- Keep coal, wood or kerosene stoves in safe working order.
- Maintain working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Secure remote controls, greeting cards, and musical children’s books. These and other devices may contain small button-cell batteries that can cause injury if ingested.
- Never leave a car or motorcycle engine running inside a garage, even if the garage door is open. Be sure your car is in good working order to insure occupants are not exposed to carbon monoxide when driving or riding in the car.

### Treatment

- If your child is unconscious, not breathing, or having convulsions or seizures due to poison contact or ingestion, call 911.
- If your child has come in contact with poison or you suspect that your child may have swallowed a button-cell battery, and has mild or no symptoms call Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222.
- Different types and methods of poisoning require different, immediate treatment:

- Swallowed poison – Take the item away from the child, and have the child spit out any remaining substance. Do not make your child vomit. Do not use syrup of ipecac.
- Skin poison -- Remove the child's clothes and rinse the skin with lukewarm water for at least 15 minutes.
- Eye poison -- Flush the child's eye by holding the eyelid open and pouring a steady stream of room temperature water into the inner corner for 15 minutes.
- Poisonous fumes – Take the child outside or into fresh air immediately. If the child has stopped breathing, start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and do not stop until the child breathes on his or her own, or until someone can take over.

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