

Lesson 1: Poison Safety

Parent/Guardian Instructions:

- Review the poison safety materials with your child (ren).
- Identify the household products that are poisonous in your house with your child (ren).
- Teach your child (ren) if a family member swallows poison to call the National Poison Control Center Hotline number 1-800-222-1222.

Lesson Discussion:

Our households contain many poisonous substances from fertilizer to antifreeze and medicines to makeup that are harmful to children of all ages. When childproofing your house, look at every room in your house from a child's (ren) perspective by getting down on your hands and knees. Be aware of your child's (ren) surroundings and what might be potentially dangerous. Here are some important steps you can take to help prevent your child (ren) from ingesting a poisonous substance.

Medications

- Don't rely on packaging to protect your children — child-resistant packaging does not mean childproof packaging.
- Never give medication to a child in the dark. You may give the wrong dosage or even the wrong medication.
- Never leave vitamin bottles, aspirin bottles, or other medications on kitchen tables, countertops, bedside tables, or dresser tops. Small children may decide to try to copy adults and help themselves.
- Never tell a child (ren) that medicine is candy.
- Store all medications — prescription and nonprescription — in a locked cabinet, far from children's reach. Even items that seem harmless, such as toothpaste, can be extremely dangerous if ingested in large quantities by children. Just because cabinets are up high doesn't mean kids can't get their hands on what's in them — children will climb up (using the toilet and countertops) to get to items in the medicine cabinet.
- Make sure purses and bags — yours and guests' — that could contain poisonous items such as medications are kept out of the reach of children at all times.
- Always keep pills and liquids in their original containers.

Cleaning Products and Other Household Chemicals

- Never put cleaning products in old soda bottles or containers that were once used for food.
- Never put roach powders or rat poison on the floors of your home.
- Store household cleaning products and aerosol sprays in a high cabinet far from reach.
- Don't keep any cleaning supplies, including dishwasher detergent and dishwashing liquids, under the sink.
- Use safety latches for all cabinets containing hazardous substances.
- Keep hazardous automotive and gardening products in a securely locked area (ideally, in your garage, if you have one).
- When you're cleaning or using household chemicals, never leave the bottles unattended if there's a small child (ren) present.

Lead Paint

- Don't use cribs, bassinets, highchairs, painted toys, or toy chests made before 1978; these may have a finish that contains dangerously high levels of lead.
- If you have an older home, have the paint tested for lead. For more information on lead, call the National Lead Information Center at (800) 424-LEAD (5323).

Other Items

- Never leave cosmetics and toiletries within easy reach of children. Be especially cautious with perfume, hair dye, hairspray, nail and shoe polish, and nail polish remover.
- Keep your child (ren) away from houseplants — and plants around your yard — that can be poisonous. Either put plants out of your child's (ren) reach or buy only plants that are nonpoisonous. A few examples of toxic houseplants include: rhododendron, English ivy, lily of the valley, and holiday plants such as holly and mistletoe.
- Discard used button cell batteries (like those in watches) safely, and store any unused ones far from children's reach (alkaline substances are poisonous).

Parent/Guardian and Child (ren) Activity:

- Have the child (ren) create an emergency contact list that contains parent/guardians emergency contact numbers – cell, pager and/or work phone numbers, toll-free poison control numbers, child's (ren) doctor number, neighbors or nearby relatives number and 9-1-1, etc. Place the list of numbers by each phone and on the refrigerator.
- Make a first aid kit and keep emergency instructions inside.
- Teach your child (ren) what to do if someone swallows poison; try to remain calm, try to keep the person still and calm, save the poison container if no adult is present, call 9-1-1 if no adult is present, state the problem briefly, give your full name and address remain on the telephone for questions or instructions.
- Have your child (ren) complete the poison activity sheet.