

# Poisoning Prevention



Because children are naturally curious they like to explore every nook and cranny of their homes and will probably find anything left lying about or unlocked. While we may not be able to stop every accident in the home we can reduce the risk of a serious injury by spending some time on prevention. Children need us to teach them about what is safe and what is not.

The most common causes of poisoning among young children are cosmetics and personal care products, household cleaning products, and pain relievers. Most child poisonings occur in the child's own home with children under 5 years of age accounting for most of the accidental childhood poisoning injuries. 1 to 3 year old children are at the most risk.

## Common Reasons for Poisoning

- Parent/carer is distracted.
- Child is not properly supervised.
- Poisons/chemicals are not stored out of reach.
- Poisons/chemicals are not put away after use.
- Disrupted household routines.
- Visitors with medication.
- On holidays, or moving.
- Unexpected change in a child's development e.g. starts to crawl or to walk.
- Poisons placed in "familiar" containers such as soft drink bottles.

## Safe Practices

### Medications

- Do not rely on packaging alone to protect your children. Child-resistant packaging does not mean childproof packaging.
- Never prepare or give medication to a child in the dark: You could easily give them the wrong dosage or even the wrong medication.
- Never leave vitamin bottles, aspirin bottles, or other medications on kitchen tables, bench tops, bedside tables, or dresser tops. Small children may decide to try to copy adults and help themselves.
- Never tell a child that medicine tastes like a lolly or that it is a lolly.
- Store all medications, both prescription and non-prescription, in a locked cupboard out of children's reach. The medicine cupboard should be high enough for them not to be able to get to it even if the child climbs on a chair or furniture.
- Make sure that purses and handbags, including those of other family members and visitors, likely to contain poisonous items such as medications are kept away from children at all times.
- Keep medications in their original container.
- Be aware of what medications are in your home.
- Return old or unused medicines to your chemist.



## Safe Practices

### Cleaning Products and Household Chemicals

- Never put cleaning products in old soft drink bottles or containers that were once used for food. This is dangerous and illegal
- Never put cockroach or rat bait on the floor of your home.
- Store household cleaning products and aerosol sprays in a high cupboard out of reach of children.
- Don't keep any cleaning supplies, including dishwasher detergent and dishwashing liquids, under the sink.
- Use safety latches for all cupboards containing hazardous substances.
- Keep hazardous automotive and gardening products in a securely locked area (ideally in your garage or shed if you have one).
- When you're cleaning or using household chemicals, never leave the bottles unattended if there's a child present.
- Take old or unused chemicals, paints and other poisons to the nearest Waste Management Centre.

### Alcohol

- Don't leave alcoholic drinks where children can reach them. Take special care during parties. Guests may not realize where they've left their drinks. Remove drinks promptly after the party.
- Keep bottles of alcohol in a locked cupboard out of reach of children.

### 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 children away from houseplants and plants around your yard that can be poisonous. Either put plants out of reach or buy only plants that are not dangerous to children.
- Discard or recycle used alkaline batteries safely, and store unused batteries away from children.

## Be Prepared

- Learn first aid and CPR
- Keep the following numbers near the phone:
  - ☑ Poisons Information Centre - **13 11 26**
  - ☑ Doctor's number
  - ☑ A neighbour or nearby relative's (in case you need someone to watch other children in an emergency)
- Have a first-aid kit handy and keep emergency instructions with it.

In an Emergency dial

**000**



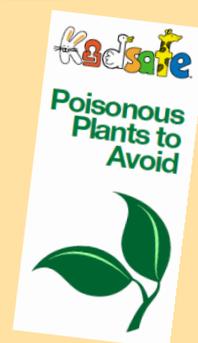
For further information refer to information sheet and brochure:

- *Safety Gates and Locks*
- *Poisonous Plants to Avoid*

available to download from [kidsafensw.org](http://kidsafensw.org)

Visit:

- *Kids Health* website [kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au](http://kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au)
- The NSW Poisons Information Centre [poisonsinfo.nsw.gov.au](http://poisonsinfo.nsw.gov.au)



KIDSAFE NEW SOUTH WALES Inc.

P: 02 9845 0890 F: 02 9845 0895

E: [SCHN-KIDSAFE@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:SCHN-KIDSAFE@health.nsw.gov.au)

[kidsafensw.org](http://kidsafensw.org)

