

Safe Storage of Medicines and Poisons at Home



Highlights

Young children often put things in their mouth to explore their taste and texture.

Children are at higher risk of poisoning when there is a disruption in their family routine.

It's important to keep medicines and poisons out of sight and reach of children.

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Why Is My Child Vulnerable to Poisoning?

Young children are exploring their environment but don't recognize the dangers around them. They tend to put things in their mouth to explore, and often mimic

adult behaviors, including taking medicines.

When Is My Child Most Susceptible to Poisoning?

Children are at a higher risk of poisoning when there are changes in their family routine, such as when they are:

On vacation

In the presence of visitors who take medicines

Moving to a new home

Household Items That Pose a Poisoning Risk

Accidental poisonings in the home are often due to children handling:

Medicines

Cosmetics

Cleaning products

Medicines can include:

Prescription medications

Over-the-counter drugs

Dietary supplements

Herbal remedies

Common household poisons include:

Disinfectants, bleach, and dishwasher detergents

Essential oils

Button batteries

Insecticides and weed killers

Alcohol and illicit drugs

Glues and paints

How to Prevent Poisoning in Your Home

Safe Medicine Use

Follow these guidelines to safely use and store medicines:

Request child-safe caps for medicines and follow all packaging instructions.
Test that you can open and close child-safety caps before leaving the pharmacy.
Avoid taking medicines in front of children, as they tend to imitate adults.
Never refer to tablets as "candies," as it makes them more appealing to children.
Dispose of expired or unwanted medications at your local pharmacy.

Proper Storage of Medicines and Poisons

Keep medicines and poisons locked in a high cupboard, out of sight and reach of children.
Always store medicines, poisons, and chemicals in their original containers, not in food or drink bottles.
Familiarize yourself with the proper usage instructions by reading labels.

Child-Safety Caps

Some medicines and poisons come with child-safety caps, which require:

A squeeze and turn
A push down and turn motion

These caps are not child-proof but help slow down children from opening them.
Always ensure the cap is securely replaced after use.

Blister Packs

Medicines in foil or blister packs are difficult to open but cannot be resealed, leaving contents easily accessible once opened. Safe storage away from children is essential to prevent accidental poisoning.

E-Cigarettes and Vaping Products

Recent increases in accidental exposure to e-cigarettes and vaping liquids in young children can lead to symptoms like coughing, severe coughing fits, and

vomiting. In more severe cases, they can cause loss of consciousness or seizures. Store these products out of children's reach.

Child Safety Tips

Always keep an eye on your child's activities.

Ensure that visitors' bags are out of reach to prevent access to potentially dangerous items, like medications.

Medicine Safety for Babies and Children

Children under 5 are most likely to end up in the hospital due to accidental poisoning, particularly from medicines. Here's how to ensure safe use:

Carefully read the medicine label - dosages vary by age and weight.

Always use the included measuring device or consult your pharmacist.

Keep a written record of dosages to avoid accidental overdosing.

What to Do if Your Child Comes Into Contact with Poison

My Child Swallowed Poison

Call the Poison Information Hotline immediately. If possible, have the package or a photo of it available.

Do not induce vomiting.

My Child Has Poison on Their Skin

Call the Poison Information Hotline immediately, and have the package or a photo of it available.

Remove any contaminated clothing. Be careful not to touch the poison directly. Wash your child's skin under cool running water.

Tools and Assistance

Return Unwanted Medicines (RUM) ProjectThe RUM Project is a free and convenient service that allows you to safely dispose of unwanted or expired

medicines. This helps reduce the risk of accidental poisoning at home. You can find collection points at your local pharmacy.

Poisons Information CentreThe Poisons Information Centre provides expert advice and assistance if your child has been exposed to a poisonous substance. You can contact them for immediate support. They also offer comprehensive information on the safe use and storage of hazardous products in the home.