Keep Kids Safe

A Parent's Guide to Poison Prevention

Children act fast… and so do poisons.

CHILD Safety LINK

Partners in Children's Safety

IWK REGIONAL POISON CENTRE

Emera

IWK Health Centre

Most Poisonings can be Prevented!

In case of a poisoning:

In Nova Scotia,
call 911
or 1-800-565-8161.

In Prince Edward Island,
call 911
or 1-800-565-8161.

In New Brunswick,
call 911
or 1-800-244-8353
(Telehealth).

What is a poison?

A poison is something that can make you sick if you taste it, smell it, get it on your skin or in your eye.

If you think that someone may have been poisoned,
call 911

The purpose of this booklet is to make you aware of the potential poisons in and around the home.

Taking the time to "poison proof" each room in your home will decrease the chances of your child being poisoned.

The **IWK Regional Poison Centre** provides timely, up-to-date advice to both the public and health care providers in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

A Quick Look at Poisonings...

- Children under the age of six are at the greatest risk of being poisoned because they are curious and like to explore by putting things in their mouths.
- Common products involved in child poisonings are: medications, cleaning products, and make-up/personal care products.
- Most poisonings with products occur while they are being used.
- Most poisonings can safely be treated at home with the advice and guidance of your local poison centre.

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Hazards in and Around the Home

As adults we don't see the world the same way as children. Imagine how things would look from the eyes of a child. While many household products do not hurt us when used properly, they can often cause harm if they are used the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person.

On the next page, many products that can cause poisoning are listed. There may be products in your home that are not listed here, but could still cause harm. If you think that you have something that could be dangerous, it is important to use the same safety measures.

Keep these items out of children's reach by locking them, preferably in a high cabinet or cupboard. It is important to always keep products in their original containers so you will know what is in it in the event of a poisoning.

Take a look through your home for poisonous products that should be locked out of children's reach.

Bathroom

- Air fresheners
- Cleaners for toilet, sink, and shower
- Cologne, perfume
- First aid products
- Make-up, nailpolish remover
- Mouthwash
- Rubbing alcohol
- Shaving products
- Toothpaste

Kitchen/Living Area

- Ammonia
- Cleaners for ovens, drains, surfaces, and dishes
- Detergents
- Furniture polish
- Medicines/Vitamins/Herbal supplements
- Alcoholic drinks
- Cigarettes/Chewing tobacco
- Plants
- Laundry detergents/Bleach/Fabric softeners
- Mouse and ant poison

Garage

- Antifreeze
- Windshield washer fluid
- Bug/Weed pest killer
- Gasoline/Kerosene
- Paint and supplies
- Turpentine
- Pool supplies
- Fertilizer
- Lighter fluid

Yard

- Wild mushrooms
- Plants/Berries/Flowers
- Shrubs and trees
- Plant food

Did you know?
16-30 new poisonous products come into homes every year.

First Aid for Poisoning

If you think your child may have been poisoned, call the Poison Centre or call 911 even if you have already done first aid.

Swallowed poison?
Do not make a child throw up. Do not give anything to eat or drink until you have called the Poison Centre.

Poison on the skin?
Remove any clothing that may have touched the poison. Run water over the skin or shower for 10 minutes, then wash with soap and rinse again.

Poison in the eyes?
Run warm water over the eye for approximately 20 minutes. Do not force the eyelid open.

Breathed in poison?
Get the child to fresh air right away.

? Why should I not try and make my child throw up?
If a child has been poisoned, making them throw up may cause more harm. The product may burn the throat on the way up or even cause the child to choke. Call the Poison Centre for advice on what should be done.

Hazard Symbols

Teach children that these symbols mean Danger! Do not touch!

Keep all products with these symbols where children cannot see or reach them. Read the label and follow the instructions. If you have trouble reading the label, ask for help. Do not cover up or remove the labels from these products.

Explosive

The container can explode if heated or punctured. Flying pieces of metal or plastic from the container can cause serious injury, especially to the eyes.

Corrosive

The product can burn your skin or eyes. If swallowed, it will damage your throat and stomach.

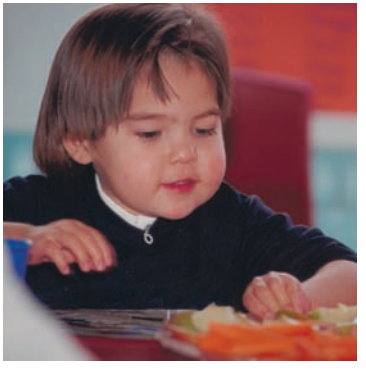
Flammable

The product or its fumes will catch fire easily if it is near heat, flames or sparks. Rags used with this product may begin to burn on their own.

Poison

If you swallow, lick or in some cases breathe in the chemical, you could become very sick or die.

Preventing Food Poisoning



1. **Wash your hands, cooking tools and food surfaces often.**
   - Use soap and water on your hands for 20 seconds before you start preparing food, when you switch from one food to another, and when you are finished preparing food.
   - Wash all cooking tools and surfaces with soap and hot water after use.

2. **Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods quickly.**
   - Refrigerate or freeze food within two hours of purchasing or preparing. On a hot day, do this within one hour.
   - Freeze ground meat, poultry, fish, and shellfish within two days.
   - Freeze other beef, lamb, or pork within three to five days.

3. Keep raw foods separate from ready-to-eat foods.

- Separate raw meat away from other foods (e.g. use a separate cutting board).

4. Cook foods to a safe temperature.

- Cook red meat until it reaches an inside temperature of at least 70˚ C (160˚ F).
- Cook poultry until it reaches an inside temperature of at least 75˚ C (170˚ F).
- Cook pork until it reaches an inside temperature of at least 70˚ C (160˚ F).
- Cook fish until it flakes.

5. Defrost food safely.

- Thaw meat and poultry in the refrigerator, not at room temperature.
- Meat or poultry defrosted in the microwave should be cooked right away.

6. Use caution when serving food.

- Throw out leftovers that have been at room temperature for more than two hours or in hot weather for more than one hour.
- Do not use canned foods with bulging lids, cracks, or dents.
- If in doubt, throw it out!

What should you do if you suspect food poisoning?

- Know that symptoms can last 24-48 hours.
- Drink plenty of fluids in frequent small amounts.
- Do not take medicine to stop diarrhea - this is how the body gets rid of the bacteria.
- **Contact the Poison Centre** so they can refer the case to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Food poisoning symptoms

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (note: if you notice blood in diarrhea, see a doctor).

Safety With Medicine

Poisoning can occur when medicine is given in the wrong amount, to the wrong person, or at the wrong time.

- Never take your own medicine in front of children - they love to imitate adults.
- Never refer to medicine as candy. Be extra careful with medicines that your child likes the taste of, especially chewable vitamins and fruit-flavoured syrups.
- Avoid distractions when giving or taking medicines.
- Always read the label and check the dosage each time you give or take medicine.

Safety Tip

Clean out your medicine cabinet often. Old or outdated medications can be returned to the pharmacy for disposal.

- Purchase medicines in child-resistant containers whenever possible.
- Keep products in their original containers.
- Never give or take medicine in the dark.
- Keep a record of the medicine your child receives noting the amount and time it was given. That way a child will not be given a "double dose" by two different caregivers.
- When visitors come to your home, make sure they keep their purses, bags, etc. out of your child's reach. There may be medications or other unsafe products inside.

IWK REGIONAL
POISON
CENTRE

In Case of Emergency Call **911**

(902) 470-8161
1-800-565-8161
24 Hours

To keep the IWK Regional Poison Centre's number handy, place these phone stickers on or near every phone in your home. To receive a sticker contact, Child Safety Link.

Does the use of a "child-resistant closure" mean the product is "child-proof"? NO! "child-resistant" slows down most children under the age of five years old from opening the container. This means that young children may still be able to open it if given enough time. Some children will be able to open it faster than others.

Mistaken Identities – Can you Tell the Difference?

Common household items can look alike especially to small children. There are many products in every home that could easily be mistaken for other items because they look similar. Children unintentionally swallow products like mouthwash, furniture polish, and dish detergent because they look like other products that are safe.

Below are some examples of dangerous household products that are often mistaken for safe products. Can you tell the difference?

Chewing gum and Nicotine gum

Cake icing, muscle pain cream, toothpaste

Household cleaner and parmesan cheese

Top Row: Vitamin C, acetaminophen, allergy medicine, and ibuprofen
Bottom Row: All candy

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Symptoms of CO Poisoning:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Nausea
- Fainting

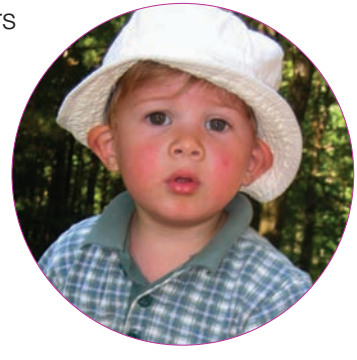
Did you know?

The exhaust from one generator has the same amount of carbon monoxide as the exhaust from hundreds of idling cars.

If your home loses power and you want to use a generator, make sure you don't use it inside.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odorless, tasteless gas. It is commonly produced by equipment such as cars, furnaces, and boilers that have not been properly maintained or serviced.

- Have your car and all fuel-burning appliances in your home regularly inspected and maintained.
- Never leave a car running in a garage.
- Keep your car's tail pipe clear of snow and other obstructions.
- Never burn a barbeque indoors or in a garage.
- Do not sleep in a room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.
- Keep appliance exhaust vents clear of snow and ice.



- Do not use a gas oven to heat your home.
- Do not use gasoline-powered equipment such as lawn mowers and snow blowers in enclosed garages or sheds.
- Keep all chimneys and flues free of debris and in proper working order.

Carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms can save lives! If you suspect that you or a member of your family has been exposed to carbon monoxide, get fresh air and call the Poison Centre.

Plant Safety

For a free copy of our Poison Plant Guide call 902-470-6496 or download it from www.childsafetylink.ca.

- Know all plants in and around your home and garden.
- Label each plant in your home with the botanical name (e.g. Ivy vs. Hedera Helix).
- Keep all houseplants, seeds, and bulbs out of reach of children.
- Teach children never to put leaves, flowers, seeds, nuts, or berries in their mouths without checking with an adult first.
- Never eat wild mushrooms or unfamiliar wild berries. Some poisonous mushrooms look like mushrooms that are safe to eat.
- Remember that any plant can cause choking or an unexpected reaction in some people.
- If your child eats a piece of plant or wild mushroom, call the Poison Centre.

Seasonal Safety

Spring/Summer

- Keep pesticides in their original containers and store them in a cool dry place out of children's reach.
- Insect repellant for children: do not use products that contain citronella or lavender oil.

  Under six months:
  - do not use product with DEET.

  6 months - 2 years:
  - use a product with 10% DEET or less.
  - use only once a day and do not apply to child's hands or face.

  2 years - 12 years:
  - use a product with 10% DEET or less.
  - do not apply more than 3 times a day and do not apply to child's hands or face.
- If a child is stung by a bee, remove the stinger by scraping a card across the area. Wash the area with soap and water. Put an ice pack on to control the swelling.

Fall and Winter

- Antifreeze (windshield washer fluid, gasline antifreeze) and de-icers (lock de-icer) are very poisonous. Less than one teaspoon can cause serious injury and even death.

Halloween

- Children should wait before they eat any treats and have them checked by parents as soon as they arrive home.
- Wash and cut open all fruit to check for objects.
- Consider throwing away any homemade treats or treats with torn/unsealed wrappers.
- Non-toxic face paint is safer than a facemask. If a child experiences a skin irritation, remove face paint immediately and wash the area with mild soap and water.
- Use caution with glow sticks to avoid breaking them. They contain chemicals that may be irritating to the skin and eyes.

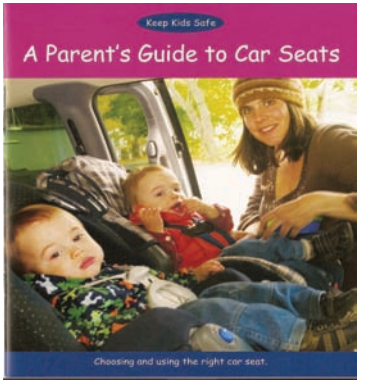
Holiday

- Keep gifts such as perfumes, colognes, and aftershaves out of children's reach.
- Button/disc batteries often come with new watches, cameras, calculators, and toys. If swallowed, an x-ray is needed to make sure the battery has passed through the stomach.
- Christmas tree preservatives (liquid added to tree water) may contain chemicals that can be harmful if swallowed by a child.
- Aerosol fake snow has chemicals that can be harmful if swallowed by a child.
- While the poinsettia and Christmas cactus are not poisonous, holly and mistletoe are very poisonous and can cause serious illness if eaten.
- Immediately after parties, clean up half-filled glasses of alcohol and cigarette butts.

Other Keep Kids Safe Booklets

Home Safety Guide

Available in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Farsi.

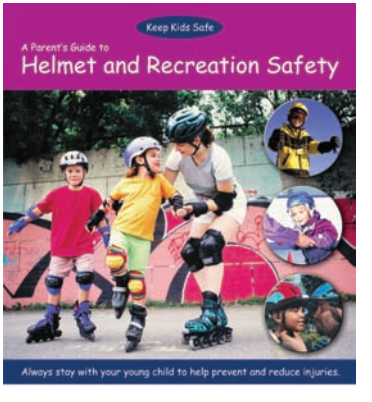


Car Seat Safety Guide

Available in English and French.

Playground Safety Guide

Available in English and French.



Helmet and Recreation Safety Guide

Available in English and French.

Images:

Pages 1, 3 & 6: Source: Healthy Images CD-Rom Vol. 1, Health Canada (1997)©

Pages 5 & 8: Source: Healthy Images CD-Rom Vol. 2, Health Canada (2000)©

Looking for more information?

IWK Regional Poison Centre
www.iwk.nshealth.ca, listed under Care Services
In Nova Scotia, call: 911 or 1-800-565-8161
In Prince Edward Island, call: 911 or 1-800-565-8161
In New Brunswick, call: 1-800-244-8353

Health Canada - Food Safety
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/index_e.html

Canadian Food Inspection Agency
www.inspection.gc.ca

Sick Kids Poison Information Centre
www.sickkids.ca/poisoninformationcentre

For more information, contact:

Child Safety Link
IWK Health Centre
5850/5980 University Avenue
PO Box 9700, Halifax, NS B3K 6R8

Call (902) 470-6496 or 1-866-288-1388
childsafetylink@iwk.nshealth.ca
www.childsafetylink.ca

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www.CHILDSafetyLINK.ca