

# Fall Poisoning Hazards

One of nature's most beautiful seasons poses special hazards for the unsuspecting child or adult. Fall's colorful berries and plentiful bulbs are a special problem for the untrained youngster. Below are detailed some of fall's particular hazards.

## BERRIES

Nature's bountiful berry crop is most evident in the fall. Berries are a natural food for birds and small animals. When children view birds eating the colorful berries, they mistakenly believe that they too can eat them. Holly, Yew, Mistletoe and Privet are just some of those that pose a potentially serious poisoning hazard. Symptoms may include cardiac and gastrointestinal disturbances and dermatitis. Information regarding toxic and nontoxic berries can be obtained from the Poison Center. In the case of accidental ingestion of berries, immediately call the Poison Center for information. If possible, obtain a sample of the berries and plant from which they came.

## BULBS

One of the better times to plant bulbs is in the fall. To the untrained eye many bulbs can be confused with other items such as the onion. This confusion is compounded whenever bulbs and onions are stored together in the refrigerator. Daffodil, iris and tulip bulbs are a few of the potentially lethal varieties of bulbs. One should take care to leave package labeling on the bulbs to aid in their identification. Contact the Poison Center in case of accidental ingestion of bulbs.

## FERTILIZER

Horticulturalists recommend that heavy rates of fertilizers be applied in the fall. Ingestion of large amounts of fertilizer can cause a wide range of symptoms. Another problem with fertilizers is that often children are present in the application area and as the fertilizer is applied they (as well as adults) can get fertilizer dust or particles in the eye, causing a painful experience. Flushing the affected eye or eyes with water for a full 15 minutes is mandatory. Generally, no permanent damage results to the eye if the eye is promptly flushed. Children should not be allowed to play in an area where fertilizer is being applied or has just been applied. Keep the number of the Poison Center handy, and be sure to call them in case of any exposure involving fertilizers.

## PAINT

Cheerful, bright, paint is very inviting to youngsters, especially, when it is flaking and peeling from walls, woodwork, furniture and toys. Even though current Federal Government requirement strictly regulate the amount of lead in paint, there were millions of gallons of paint manufactured before 1973 with high levels of lead. Thus, the paint your child may be chewing may have high lead levels. Excessive amounts of

lead in the body can cause a wide range of problems including brain damage. Repair and repaint, with low lead paint all areas when paint is chipped, peeling or flaking. Use nontoxic paint on children's articles. Contact the Poison Center in case of exposure to paint.

### CARBON MONOXIDE

As the cold weather sets in some people will use sources of energy for heating that can pose a potential hazard. Gas space heaters, wood burning stoves and fireplaces need proper ventilation. Another risk is running cars or trucks when a garage door is closed. Never BBQ in your garage even with the door open. Carbon Monoxide can be a silent killer. It is odorless, colorless and tasteless. Early symptoms tend to be similar to the flu. Carbon monoxide poisoning will not cause a fever. The flu will not cause confusion. Children and pregnant women can be at greater risk. With higher amounts of carbon monoxide, seizures, coma, and death can occur. The only way to know if there is a problem is to have carbon monoxide detector.

### OTHER FALL POISONING HAZARDS

- Insect and Snake bites
- Food Poisoning
- Mushrooms
- Pesticides
- Carbon monoxide from poorly vented heaters