

Winter Poisoning Hazards

A child's natural curiosity coupled with a lack of knowledge concerning potentially poisonous items may cause children to place many non-food substances into their mouths. The following pose special poisoning hazards during the winter months.

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

The emphasis on personal cleanliness in the American society has brought about an increased utilization of a wide variety of products used to cleanse and beautify the body. There are a multitude of personal care items, such as colognes, mouth washes, lotions and shampoos in the average home. These items can pose a poisoning potential for an unsuspecting child. Care should be taken in keeping personal care items out of reach and sight of children. Information about "Poison Proofing" your home and yard can be obtained from the Poison Center. In case of poisoning involving a personal care item, immediately contact the Poison Center.

MEDICATIONS

Winter is a season full of minor illnesses. Young children spending most of their winter days and nights indoors are tempted by a wide range of colorful medications, especially, the ever-present cold medications. Poisonings involving the use of medications account for the greatest percentage of cases reported to the Poison Center. The culprits are both prescription drugs and over the counter or non-prescription preparations. The victims are often children under the age of five, who may think of medicine as candy. Vitamins and acetaminophen are perennial favorites for this age group. While these are safe medications when used properly, the ingestion of large quantities of these and other common household medicines can be fatal. Many parents think that because a product has a child resistant closure that a child cannot open it, however, they can. The package resistance is designed to increase the time it takes, so the child can be found. All medications should be stored under lock and key - out of the reach of children. In case of an ingestion of any medication, contact the Poison Center.

INDOOR PLANTS

There is an increase in the number of accidental ingestions involving plants because of the popularity of plants as a decorative item in the home. Although a wide range of effects can be caused by plants, the most common symptoms involve the gastrointestinal tract. It is important to be able to identify the plants in your home. Lists of toxic and nontoxic plants are available from the Poison Center. Armed with this knowledge, an adult can remove or place up high any poisonous plants that may be in the home or yard. Plants should be labeled with their names so that visiting friends or relatives with child care responsibilities will readily know what type of plants is involved should ingestion occur.

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Every year thousands of children are poisoned by hazardous household products. They may be brightly colored, smell good or even look like food, but they are potential poisons. Cleaning products, deodorizers, detergents and furniture polishes are just a few of the many potential hazards found in every home. All household products should be kept under lock and key then not in use. Store household products in their original containers. Remember to call the Poison Center immediately should an ingestion involving a household product occur. A list of these and other poison prevention tips are available through the Poison Center.

OTHER WINTER POISONING HAZARDS

- Petroleum Products
- Carbon Monoxide from poorly vented heaters
- Natural Gas
- Cough and Cold Preparations
- Home Medicines