

Summer Poisoning Hazards

With summer's long days, it is not surprising that many of summer's poisoning hazards involve outdoor activities. Listed below is information concerning some of the more common of these hazards.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

Petroleum Products include such things as gasoline, paint thinner, furniture polishes, kerosene and mineral or motor oils. Closely related are products derived from trees like turpentine and pine oil. As these products are commonly found in most homes, they are often swallowed by curious children. Petroleum products often cause their damage by getting into the lungs—causing prolonged coughing and difficulty breathing. They may also make a child vomit, sleepy or lethargic.

Because these products are potentially very dangerous they should always be kept out of the reach of children. If your child does ingest one of these materials, contact the Poison Center. They will recommend the proper treatment, which is dependent upon the particular product involved. Do Not induce vomiting unless instructed to do so by the Poison Center, as this may only increase the risk of serious problems.

MUSHROOMS

Mushroom (or toadstools) are fascinating objects for most young children. Unfortunately, many common species are capable of causing symptoms or even death if eaten. There are many myths about mushroom, such as: "if an animal eats a mushroom, it is safe to eat" or "if it doesn't turn a silver spoon black when boiled, it's safe" or "mushroom growing in clusters are safe." All of these myths and many others are false. It takes an expert to identify mushrooms and tell if they are safe. Even then, some species may be poisonous at some times or locations and not others. All wild mushroom ingestions by children should be considered potentially dangerous. Contact the Poison Center for advice. Remember, never pick and eat wild mushroom.

Bites

Bites of all types are a common summer problem. They can be annoying, painful and sometimes fatal. The following types of bites deserve immediate medical attention : 1) bites from a poisonous snake, 2) bites from stinging insects in patients with a known serious allergy to these insect bites, 3) bites from poisonous insects (certain spiders and scorpions) or 4) any bite that produces major symptoms, such as difficulty breathing or pronounced local swelling. Other types of bites can usually be cared at home—perhaps with the help of the Poison Center.

Most bites from stinging insects including bees, wasps, ants and most spiders can be treated by the application of cold compresses (not ice) applied directly to the skin. The application of an aluminum-based antiperspirant to the site, if done soon

after a bite, is sometimes helpful.

Technique for tick removal: 1) Do not handle the tick with bare hands because of infectious agents may enter through the mucous membranes of breaks in skin, 2) use blunt, curved forceps or tweezers, or shield the fingers with rubber gloves, a tissue or paper towel, 3) grasp the tick as close to the skin surface as possible and pull upward with steady, even pressure without twisting and jerking, which might cause mouthparts to part off and remain in the lesion, 4) after removing the tick, thoroughly disinfect the bite site with isopropyl alcohol, and wash hands with soap and water, 5) dispose of the tick by flushing it down the toilet.

If you have any questions about bites or stings, contact the Poison Center.

OTHER SUMMER POISONING HAZARDS

Herbicides

Fertilizers

Pesticides

Food poisoning

Outdoor plants