

Unintentional poisoning is a major cause of injury and hospital admissions for children in Australia. Most incidents occur due to unsupervised access. This can occur when poisons are left out or not stored in a safe place, out of reach of children.

Why are children more likely to be poisoned?

- Children are curious and they love to explore the environment around them. They often do this by putting objects in their mouths.
- They like to imitate what adults do, including taking medications.
- They don't understand the dangers that some products pose and are unable to read warning labels.

What substances are most commonly involved in child poisoning?

- Common over the counter medications such as paracetamol, cough and cold remedies and antihistamines.
- Prescription medicines, such as antidepressants, oral contraceptive pills and various blood pressure drugs.
- Household products such as bleach, disinfectants, detergents, toilet bowl cleaners and eucalyptus oil.
- Cosmetics including perfumes and nail polish remover.
- Pesticides, including insecticides, rodenticides and herbicides.



How can you reduce the risk for your child?

- Remember that child resistant containers are not child proof – they are designed to be difficult for children to open, but not impossible.
- Store all poisonous products out of sight and reach of children, at least 1.5 metres off the ground in a lockable cupboard. Ensure that medications and chemicals are stored in separate safe areas.
- If medicines need to be kept in the fridge, use a small, portable, lockable container for them.
- Use child resistant locks on cupboards containing poisons.
- Always read instructions carefully and return all poisonous products- including medications- to their safe storage area immediately after use.
- Administer medication in a well lit room and keep a record of the time and amount of each dose.
- Don't refer to medicines as 'lollies'.
- Leave chemicals and detergents in their original containers and make sure they are clearly labelled. Never transfer them to other containers (e.g. soft drink bottles).
- Only fill the dishwasher with dishwashing powder just before you are about to put it on. Ensure the dishwasher door is kept closed to restrict children's access.
- Keep handbags out of reach of children- these often contain hazardous medications and cosmetics.
- Dispose of any unnecessary poisons and medications safely and as soon as possible.
- Keep the Poisons Information Centre number, 13 11 26, near your home phone and in your mobile phone.

What to do if you think your child has ingested a poisonous substance:

- Never try to induce vomiting.
- Pick up the product container and take it with you to the phone - the Poisons Information Centre will want to know what ingredients are in the product.
- Phone the **Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 (24 hours a day, Australia wide)**. They will then advise you on what to do next.

For more information please contact Kidsafe Victoria via info@kidsafevic.com.au