



Poisoning

Every year hundreds of children need medical care for poisoning from products that are commonly found around the home.

From July 2010 to June 2015, 2,527 children aged between zero and fifteen years were admitted to the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children Emergency Department as a result of a poison related injury.

Most accidental poisonings occur to children less than five years of age, with this age group accounting for almost half of all poison presentations. Children aged one to three are at the highest risk.

Over half of poisoning presentations in children are from pharmaceuticals. The most common product involved in poisoning cases is paracetamol, a common painkiller found in most households.

Why are children at risk?

Between one to three years of age children begin to develop skills that make them more mobile, which means potentially toxic products are more easily reached.

Young children are exploring their world and will put anything they can get into their mouths. At this age they are curious, but lack judgment and are unable to read. They also like to imitate what others do, which can include things like taking medications.

Child poisoning can occur at any time but make sure to take extra care during times where these products may be more accessible. For example, medicine may be more accessible when someone is sick or when grandparents who take medicine regularly are visiting.

Remember child resistant does not mean child proof – many young children can still open them.

Prevention of poisoning

- Be aware of where the different poisonous products are stored in your home.
- When storing poisons use child resistant locks on cupboards or a lockable cupboard, preferably 1.5 metres above the ground. Return all poisons immediately to their safe storage area after use
- Store all medicines, cleaning products and other chemicals in their original containers.
- Do not store poisons near foods. Some medicines may need to be kept in the refrigerator - use a small lockable container to store these safely.
- Never refer to medicines or vitamins as “lollies” and always read the label before giving medications
- Use products that are in child resistant containers and make sure that lids are on properly after use.
- Keep your guest’s handbag out of reach of your children as they may contain products such as medication.
- Check that the plants in your garden are not poisonous. Refer to the Kidsafe WA fact sheet on Poisonous Plants for more information.
- Always keep the Poisons Information Centre phone number **(13 11 26)** near your phone.

First Aid for Poisons

If your child swallows a poison, **do not try to make them vomit,**

Take the child and poisons container and ring the **Poisons Information Centre** on

13 11 26 (Australia-wide, 24 hours a day).

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For more information **(08) 6244 4880**
Child Safety Information Line **1800 802 244**
Poisons Information Line **13 11 26**

