

# Poison Prevention

## What is a poison?

A poison is defined as any product or substance that can harm someone if it is used in the wrong way, by the wrong person or in the wrong amount. Nearly 82 people in the United States are killed each day related to accidental poisoning. Another 1,900 are treated in emergency departments.

## Examples of possible poisons include:

- Some household products
- Chemicals in the workplace or environment
- Drugs; prescription and over-the-counter
- Herbal, illegal or animal medicines
- Snake bites
- Insect stings
- Spider bites
- Scorpion stings



## Most poisonings are unintentional:

- They are often caused by eating or drinking common household substances, such as:
  - Overdoses of prescription medications.
  - Overdoses of nutritional substances like iron. (Even these can be toxic at high enough levels.)
- Keys to preventing poisoning include:
  - Having knowledge of the products in your proximity.
  - Controlling access.
  - Understanding proper use and healthy dosage.

## Practice drug and medicine safety:

- Keep all medications in a safe place that limits accessibility to those designated to administer them.
- Adhere to the warnings and instructions of labels and your treating physician.
- Consume the appropriate amount and type of medication. Take medications in a well lit area to ensure that you take them correctly.
- Keep all medicines in their original, labeled container.
- Never share or sell medications.
- Dispose of unused or expired drugs.

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## Practice chemical safety:

- Know what chemicals are in your surroundings and keep them in a safe and secure place away from children. They must only be accessible by the appropriate people.
- Keep the poison control number visibly posted (1-800-222-1222).
- Read labels and understand hazards before using any chemicals. Safety data sheets (SDSs) have complete hazard control information and are obtained from the manufacturer.
- Keep all chemicals in their original labeled container. Do not place chemicals in food containers or store them with food materials.
- Never mix different chemicals together.
- Wear proper protective clothing per the SDS and chemical label, and wash thoroughly immediately after working with chemicals.
- Ensure that areas are properly ventilated before using chemicals.

## Be aware of carbon monoxide:

- Know the sources of carbon monoxide (heaters, vehicles and other internal combustion engines) and ensure they are properly maintained and used only in well-ventilated areas.



If you think someone has been poisoned,  
call **1-800-222-1222** right away!

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