

Poison Prevention...Keeping Families Safe



Target Age:

Adults 18 years and older

Goal:

To increase awareness of potential poisoning risks and teach ways to prevent a poisoning from occurring in people of all ages, but especially in children.

Learning Objective:

Participants will be able to:

- list at least 1 potential poison in each of the five listed rooms/areas of the home.
- identify 2 poison prevention strategies.
- relate 2 reasons why children under the age of 6 are at an increased risk for poisonings.
- explain the difference between “child-resistant” and “child-proof” as it relates to poisonings.
- relate 2 questions the poison control specialist may ask you when you call.

Timeline:

This lesson is designed to be a 60 minute presentation.

Materials:

- (Optional) Power Point or overhead projector and Power Point slide transparencies. Slides are available on the Utah Poison Control Center (UPCC) website: www.utahpoisoncontrol.org
- Copy of Poison Name Game grid for each participant (see appendix B)
- (Optional) small prize for the winner of the game
- Look-a-like products (see appendix C for suggestions)
- UPCC telephone stickers and or magnets available by calling 1-800-222-1222 or by ordering on the UPCC website www.utahpoisoncontrol.org
- Household Guide to Poison Control handout for each participant (see appendix D)
- Pen or Pencil for each participant
- Video: *Unintentional Poisoning: Prevent, React* run time 15 minutes. Available in English and Spanish at the UPCC 1-800-222-1222.

Description:

Poisonings can occur at any age however children are at particular risk. UPCC statistics show that children under the age of 6 account for approximately 60% of poison exposures. It is important to recognize hazards that may poison or injure children and

adults, understand prevention techniques, have knowledge of initial first aid, and learn how the Utah Poison Control Center can help.

Content:

The lesson content is presented in a brief outline for easy reference. This is followed by detailed content which includes all learning activities, methods, materials list, and information needed to facilitate the session.

Content Outline:

1. Introduction

- a. Introduce self
- b. Explain purpose

2. Ice Breaker Game

- a. Poison Name Game

3. Utah Poison Control Center (UPCC)

- a. Mission Statement
- b. UPCC Help

4. Definitions and Statistics

- a. What is a Poison?
- b. Utah's poison problem
- c. Age distribution

5. Common Substances

- a. Children under age 6
- b. All ages

6. When Do Poisonings Occur?

- a. When product is in use
- b. Peak age

7. What Are These Poisons and What Should We Do About Them?

- a. Medicines and Vitamins
- b. Deadly in a Dose
- c. Household Products
- d. Cosmetics and Personal Care Products
- e. Topicals
- f. Pesticides and Car Care Products
- g. Miscellaneous Poisons
- h. Prevention Strategies
- i. Carbon Monoxide

8. Why Are Children More Likely to be Poisoned?

- a. Stages of development
- b. Risk factors

9. Adult Poisonings

- a. Not just a problem for children

10. How Do We Respond to a Poisoning?

- a. Emergency action first aid tips
- b. Calling the UPCC

11. Video

- a. *Unintentional Poisoning: Prevent, React*

12. Review

- a. Question/Answer Activity
- b. Assignment

13. Conclusion

- a. Contact the UPCC
- b. Magnets & Phone Stickers

14. Appendices

- b. Name Game handout and answer key
- c. Look-alike ideas
- d. Household Guide to Poison Control handout

Poison Prevention...Keeping Families Safe Lesson

1. Introduction

- a. **Introduce yourself**
- b. **Explain purpose:** To learn about different types of poisons, how children and adults can get poisoned, how to prevent potential poisonings, and how to get help if a poisoning occurs.

2. Icebreaker/Game

Poison Name Game: Distribute the Poison Name Game house grid (located in appendix B) to each participant. Explain that they will be given 5 minutes to write as many potentially poisonous products as possible in each of the appropriate room grids. When the time limit is completed each participant one-by-one, reads the items on their paper. If more than one person has an item listed then all participants must cross it out. Participants continue reading their lists and others indicating if they have the same item listed. Once everyone has read through their lists, participants count the number of products left on their paper. The person with the most items listed wins. A small prize could be given to the winner (optional). Note: An answer key is provided for the instructor as a guide to potentially poisonous items.

3. Utah Poison Control Center (UPCC)

Present the following information to the class: You may use the slides if desired. To access them visit the UPCC website: www.utahpoisoncontrol.org

- a. **Mission Statement:** To prevent and minimize adverse effects from a poison exposure through education, service, and research.
- b. **UPCC Help:** Staff consists of registered nurses, registered pharmacists, medical doctors and health educators. The UPCC is a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week hotline. Help is free, expert, and confidential. The UPCC helps people of all ages, in all types of situations.

4. Definitions and Statistics

Present the following information to the class:

- a. **What is a Poison:** Anything someone eats, breathes, gets in the eyes or on the skin, which can cause sickness or death if it gets into or on the body. Poisons come in different forms; solid, liquid or gas/spray.
- b. **Utah's Poison Problem:**
 - Over 50,000 calls each year
 - Over 90% occur in the home
 - Nearly 80% are managed on-site with telephone follow-up (person was not referred to a health care facility)
- c. **Average Age Distribution of Human Exposures**
 - 60% involved children less than 6 years of age
 - 20% were people age 20-59 years of age
 - 5% involved children ages 13-19 years
 - 5% involved children ages 6-12

- 5% were people age 60 or more

5. Common Substances

Briefly present the following information to the class. They will be discussed in greater detail later in the lesson:

- Most common poisonings in children under 6 years of age** (note: the rank order of this list changes slightly from year to year, but the categories stay the same).
 - Cosmetics and Personal Care Products
 - Analgesics (Pain Medicine)
 - Household Cleaners
 - Topicals
 - Vitamins and Minerals
 - Foreign Bodies
 - Gastrointestinal Preparations
 - Cough and Cold Preparations
- Most common poisonings in people of all ages** (note: the rank order of this list changes slightly from year to year, but the categories stay the same).
 - Analgesics (Pain Medicine)
 - Household cleaners
 - Cosmetics and Personal Care Products
 - Vitamins & Minerals
 - Topicals
 - Sedatives/Hypnotics/Antipsychotics
 - Foreign Bodies
 - Pesticides

6. When Do Poisonings Occur?

- When Product is in Use:** Explain the scenario of a mother who normally has all the cleaning chemicals locked up high in a cupboard, but must get them out to do the cleaning. While she is cleaning, the doorbell rings and the cleaning products are left unattended. That is when the child is at a high risk for a poisoning.
- Peak Age:** Explain to the class that the peak age for poisonings is 18 months old.

7. What are These Poisons and What Should We Do About Them?

Explain the various poisons and discuss with the class ways to prevent a poisoning. Prevention strategies are outlined in section h below.

- Medicines and Vitamins:** Pains relievers (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, aspirin), cough and cold preparations (decongestants, antihistamines, cough suppressants), vitamins (especially iron).
- Deadly in a Dose:** These medicines can be very dangerous or even deadly in just a single dose unit. Antidepressants, narcotics, heart medicine, high blood pressure medicine, and diabetic medicine.

- c. **Household Products:** Bleach, drain & toilet bowl cleaner, laundry products, ammonia cleaners, dish detergent, oven cleaners. Many household products and medicines look similar to food/drink or candy. **Show the participants the look-alike products** (ideas include; Windex/blue drink, medicine/candy, Pine-Sol/apple juice) to demonstrate the confusion that can be caused with products that look the same. Many household products are colorful and very enticing to young children (see appendix C for look alike ideas).
- d. **Cosmetics and Personal Care Products:** Mouthwash, toothpaste, nail products, shampoo, perfume, talcum powder, lotion, make-up.
- e. **Topicals:** Acne preparations, diaper products, cortisone cream, athletic rub.
- f. **Pesticides and Car Care Products:** Gasoline, motor oil, kerosene, windshield wiper fluid, pesticides, anti-freeze, fertilizer.
- g. **Miscellaneous Poisons:** Plants, foreign bodies (coins, button batteries, hearing aids), food products (cooking temperature insufficient, storing and thawing foods improperly, cross contaminating).
- h. **Prevention Strategies:** The following prevention strategies should be discussed.
 - **Put it Up, Lock it Up:** Keep poisons out of the reach of children. Follow instructions for product use. Do not mix cleaning products. Store products in original containers. Use cleaning products in well-ventilated areas. Never leave open products unattended.
 - **Locks, Lids, and Latches:** Note: If possible, have a variety of different safety devices to show the class. There are many different types available. Choose what works best for you. **Child Resistant** does **NOT** mean **Child Proof**. It simply gives you a few more minutes to catch them in the act.
 - **Medicines:** Follow dosing instructions carefully. Be aware of multiple ingredients. Close the lid tightly after using a medicine. Never call medicine “candy”. Don’t take your medicine when children are watching.
- i. **Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (CO):** CO is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas. Signs of CO poisoning are: headache, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, irregular breathing, mental confusion, unconsciousness, ultimately death.
Prevention:
 - Install a CO detector near sleeping areas
 - Never operate gas burning appliances, machines, or equipment in an enclosed space such as the garage, tents, indoor spaces. Examples of these are: gas powered space heaters, generators, or grills.
 - Have chimney and flue cleaned professionally. If the flue is closed or blocked or if a wood burning stove is leaking through cracks, it is a danger.
 - Have furnace inspected annually and be sure that other appliances such as kitchen ranges, hot water heaters, and clothes dryers that run on gas, are working properly.
 - Do not leave motor vehicles running in the garage.

8. Why Are Children More Likely to Be Poisoned?

- a. **Stages of Development:** Discuss the following stages as they relate to poisonings.

- **Infants (0-6 months):** Children in this age group are usually not very mobile therefore most poisonings occur as a result of adult error such as administering the wrong dose, or the wrong medicine.
- **Crawlers (6 months-1½ years):** Children this age are usually mobile and begin exploring their environment. Putting things in the mouth is a primary method of learning. Poisonings can occur as a result of this natural behavior.
- **Toddlers and Preschoolers (1½ years-3 years):** Children in this age group are very mobile. They are usually very curious. They can usually climb and reach higher. Products that look alike are very deceiving to children of this age. Nothing is child-proof. Reinforce with the group that confusion can be caused with products that look the same. Many household products are colorful and very enticing to young children.

b. Risk Factors and What to do About Them:

- **Child’s Curious Nature:** Explore, taste and touch to learn.
- **Improper Storage:** Use prevention methods—Lock it up, keep out of reach.
- **Adult Distractions:** Telephone call, doorbell, meal preparation etc. Most poisonings occur when the product is in use. Take the product or the child with you to answer the door or phone.

9. Adult Poisonings

Poisoning is not just a problem for children: Explain that adults are also at risk for a poisoning. Over 25% of calls to the UPCC are for adults over age of 19. The most common substances involved in adult poisonings are pain relievers and sedatives.

10. How Do We Respond To a Poisoning?

- a. Emergency Action First Aid Tips:** Explain what to do for each type of poisoning. Emphasize the importance of calling the poison center.
- **Swallowed poison:** Do not give anything, call the poison control center
 - **Inhaled poison:** Get victim to fresh air, call poison control center
 - **Poison on skin:** Remove contaminated clothing and rinse skin with water for 10 minutes, call the poison control center
 - **Poison in eye:** Flush eye for 15 minutes using a large cup filled with lukewarm water held 2-4 inches from eye, call the poison control center
 - **Other Important Tips:** Remain calm, don’t wait for the victim to become sick since some symptoms are delayed and waiting can be a serious mistake. If the victim is unconscious call 911. **Do not** use Syrup of Ipecac or cause vomiting unless instructed to do so by your doctor.
- b. Calling the UPCC:** Don’t be afraid to call. Only the people who help you will know your name. Discuss the following questions that may be asked when calling poison control. Explain that cooperating with the poison control specialist to answer these questions will help them receive critical information in a timely manner. Emphasize that all information is confidential and free of charge:

- How is the person feeling or acting right now?
- What is the age, name, and approximate weight of the person?
- What product or item was the person exposed to? Have the container with you when you call, if possible.
- How much of the product do you think the person had?
- When did it happen?
- What is your name and phone number? It is important to give this information so the nurse or pharmacist can call back and check on the person.

11. Video

Unintentional Poisoning: Prevent, React

This is an animated video that focuses on preventing poisonings. Common poison scenarios are demonstrated. It also explains what to do if a poisoning occurs; including first aid and how to get help. Run time: 15 minutes. Discuss with the class the prevention concepts from the video. Note: Video available in English and Spanish at the UPCC 1-800-222-1222.

12. Review

- Question/Answer Activity:** Explain that we come in contact with poisons everyday. Awareness and simple prevention strategies like those discussed in this lesson can help keep us and our children safe. Ask several questions from the lesson to reinforce the message. You may use the objectives of this lesson plan to formulate some of the questions. This can be an informal question/answer period or can be more formal where the questions are asked and small prizes or treats are given for those who answer the questions correctly.
- Assignment:** Pass out the Household Guide to Poison Control handout (located in appendix D). Review the potential dangers found in each room. Also, have the participants refer to their house grids from the Poison Name Game. Give them the assignment to use the *Household Guide to Poison Control* handout as well as the house grid handout from the Poison Name Game and take action to safeguard children by going through each room of their own house and taking safety measures to help prevent a poisoning. Advise them to look at each room from a child's perspective as they complete the checklist at home.

13. Conclusion

- Contact the UPCC:** Don't hesitate to call the Poison Control Center in the event of a poisoning. Services are **FREE**, and **CONFIDENTIAL**.
- Magnets & Phone Stickers:** If possible distribute magnets and telephone stickers. Instruct participants to post the poison hotline number in their homes. They can be obtained by contacting the UPCC at 1-800-222-1222.

14. Appendices

- Name Game handout and answer key**
- Look-alike ideas**

d. Household Guide to Poison Control handout

Resources:

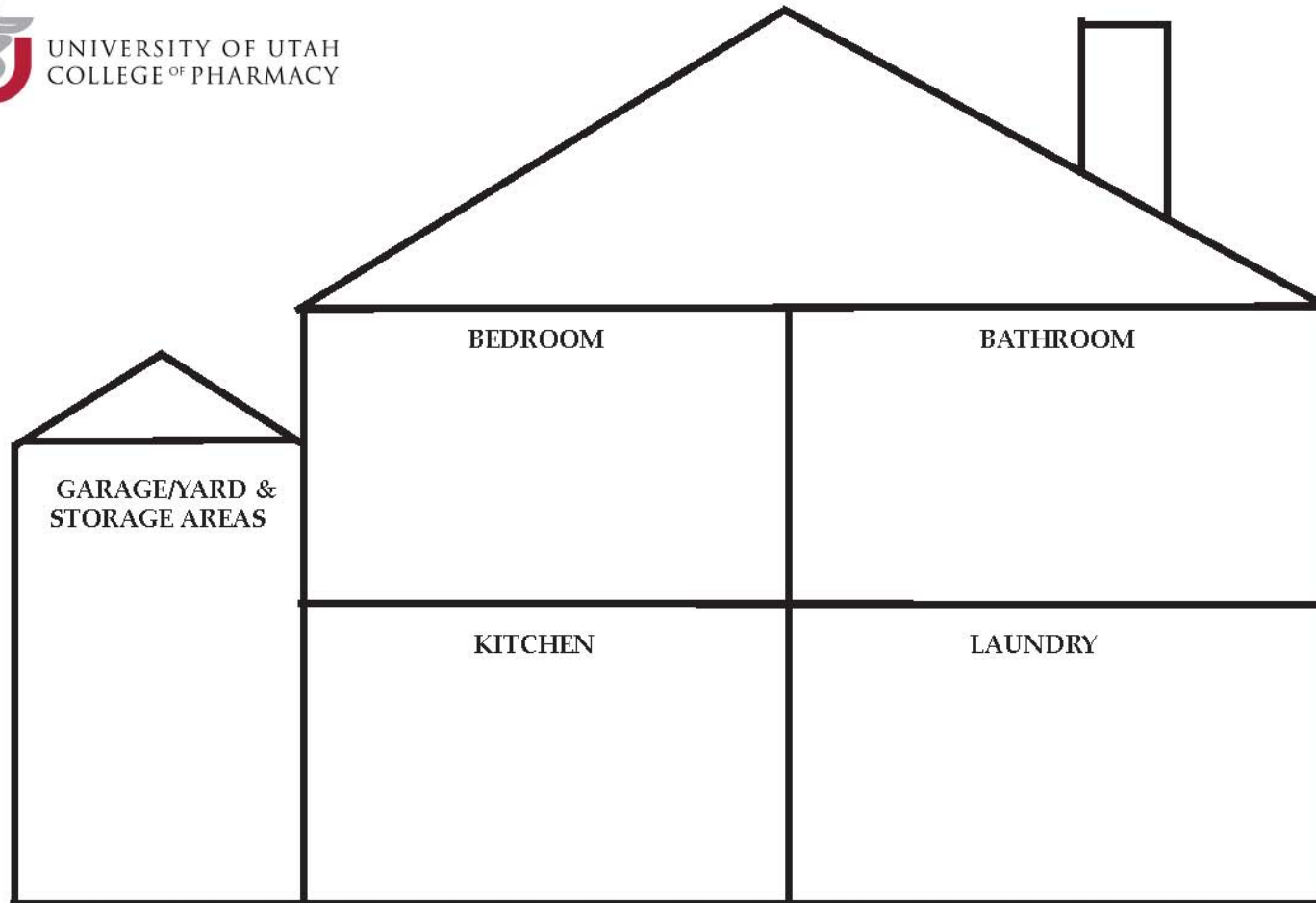
- ***Unintentional Poisoning: Prevent, React* video:**
 - Produced by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Bellevue Hospital Center 2004
 - Call Utah Poison Control Center to request a copy (1-800-222-1222)

- <http://www.utahsafetycouncil.org/>

Appendix

POISON NAME GAME

Utah Poison Control Center

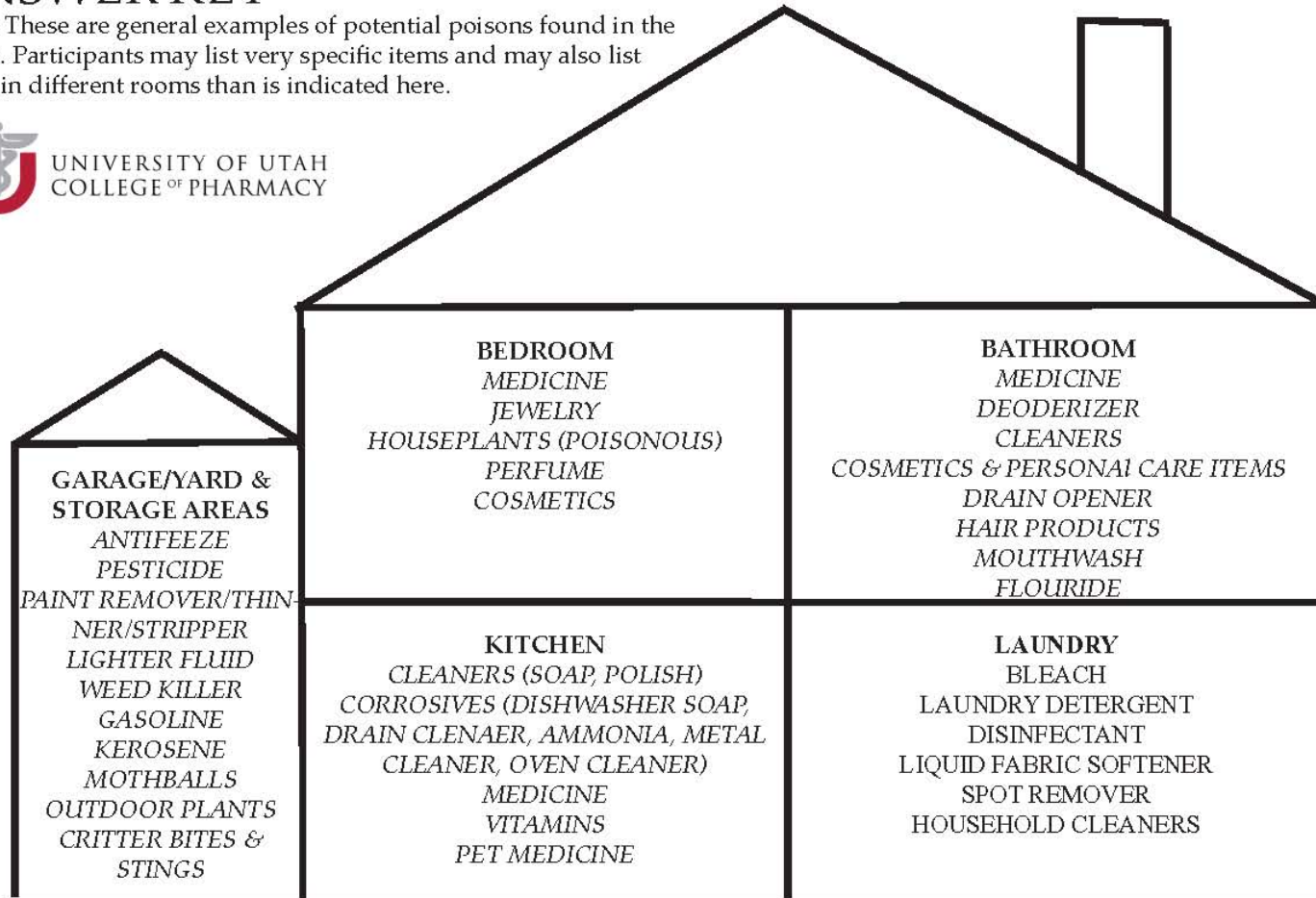


POISON NAME GAME

Utah Poison Control Center

ANSWER KEY

Note: These are general examples of potential poisons found in the home. Participants may list very specific items and may also list them in different rooms than is indicated here.



Look-A-Like Display

A look-a-like display is a variety of poisonous items that look almost identical to non-poisonous items. The purpose of the look-a-like display is to show parents and children how easily a poison can be mistaken for something good to eat or drink.

Look-a-like examples:

Comet	Parmesan cheese
Grape cough syrup	Grape Juice
Cherry cough syrup	Fruit punch
Pine Sol	Apple juice
Bleach	Milk (in half gallon jug)
Muscle Cream	Toothpaste

**To find additional pairs simply go to a grocery store and walk up the cleaner aisle and juice/sports drink section. You will be amazed at the large number of look a likes out there!

Medicine and candy display

A medicine and candy display is a very effective way to show adults how difficult it can be to distinguish between medicine and candy. Pass the box around during presentations.

Materials:

One 8x 10 clear plastic shadow box available at any craft store

One 8 x 10 colored sheet of paper

One each of the following pairs:

White Necco wafer	Alka seltzer
Orange or red aspergum	Orange or red chiclet
Green Drixoryl pill	Green M&M candy
Red Sudafed pill	Red hot candy
Flavored Tums	Same flavor Sweettart
Orange Motrin	Orange Skittle

- Title the 8 X 10 piece of paper "Can you tell the difference? Your child probably can't. Make a column for medicine and candy. Place the paper into the shadow box.
- Glue each piece of candy in a vertical row under the candy header and the medicine in a vertical row under the medicine header next to the appropriate name.
- **Note: Extra care should be taken with these products if children are present.**

HOUSEHOLD GUIDE TO POISON CONTROL



This checklist is designed to help parents identify potential hazards in the home. Take some time to go through it and learn what you should do to prevent poisonings.

Poison Safety Checklist for Poison-Proofing Your Home

Complete the following checklist. See if your home is safe from potential poisons. Check that all poisons are safely stored out of reach of children and pets.

Check the kitchen: Household cleaning products are the cause of over 10% of poisonings in children under the age of six.

Be aware of these products:

- Cleaners – carpet/upholstery cleaners, furniture polish, soap/detergents
- Corrosives – automatic dishwashing detergent, drain cleaners, ammonia, metal cleaners, oven cleaners
- Medicines – pain relievers (aspirin and acetaminophen), diet aids, vitamin/iron pills, pet medications

What you should know:

- Remove medicines from countertops, window sills, and open areas.
- Put safety latches on all drawers and cabinets where harmful products are stored (Applies throughout the home).
- Store household products away from food.

Check the bathroom: Medicines are the cause of over 40% of all poisonings.

Be aware of these products:

- Medicines
- Mouthwashes
- Fluoride Rinses
- Deodorizers
- Hair Products
- Aftershaves
- Cleaners
- Drain Openers
- Hair Removers
- Cosmetics – nail polish/removers, baby powder, perfumes

What you should know:

- Make sure that all medicines are in child-resistant containers and labeled properly.
- Dispose of old medicines properly

Check the bedroom: Cosmetics and personal care products are the cause of 12% of poisonings in children under six.

Be aware of these products:

- Jewelry
- Medicines
- House plants – philodendron, dumbcane, pathos

What you should know:

- Remove all medicines from the dresser or bedside table.
- Keep all perfumes, cosmetics, and powders out of reach.

Check the laundry area: Bleaches are the most common household cleaning product swallowed by young children.

Be aware of these products:

- Bleach
- Laundry detergent
- Disinfectants



What you should know:

- Keep all products in original containers.
- Keep bleach, stain removers, detergents, and fabric softener out of reach or in a locked cabinet.

Check the garage/basement/storage areas: Household chemicals and insecticides are among the most common products that poison adults.

Be aware of these products:

- Antifreeze
- Lighter fluid
- Weed killer
- Pesticides
- Mothballs
- Gasoline/kerosene
- Paint remover/thinner/stripper



What you should know:

- Keep all products in their original containers.
- Keep insect sprays and weed killers in locked storage.
- Keep turpentine, paints, and rust removers in locked storage.

This information was provided by:

Utah Poison Control Center
585 Komas Dr., Suite 200
Salt Lake City, UT 84108

www.utahpoisoncontrol.org

(800) 222-1222 Toll Free

Poison Control Specialists available 24 hours, 7 days a week