

## **HOLIDAY POISON SAFETY**



Listen up, parents!

The Blue Ridge Poison Center receives more calls about children under the age of 6 than any other age group. The holidays are particularly full of opportunities for young children to encounter poisons. Plan ahead to avoid danger.

Many poisonings happen when the usual household routine is upset, such as when you have guests in your home. Parents and caregivers become easily distracted in all the excitement and chaos. Grandparents and other adults who aren't used to supervising young children may not be aware of the challenges.

*Remember: Children act fast, and so do poisons!*

### **SAFETY TIP #1: KEEP ALL MEDICINES AND PRODUCTS IN A LOCKED CABINET, OUT OF THE SIGHT AND REACH OF CHILDREN.**

Guests may bring medicines and other personal products into your home and leave them where children can reach them, such as in a suitcase or on a bedside table. Young children are naturally curious and will readily put these products in their mouths. Prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, and even personal products like mouthwash or perfume can be harmful to a child if swallowed. Provide your guests with a safe place to store purses, suitcases, and toiletries.



Relatives and friends who do not have young children have probably not poison-proofed their homes. Keep an extra sharp eye on your children and the surroundings when visiting others.

### **SAFETY TIP #2: DON'T LEAVE OPENED GIFTS UNATTENDED UNDER THE TREE OR OTHERWISE IN REACH OF SMALL CHILDREN.**

Personal products such as bubble bath and cologne, or products like alcohol, are popular gifts. Their sweet fragrance and pretty packaging attract children and can cause serious problems when swallowed. Other gifts may contain *button batteries*: tiny, flat, coin-like batteries commonly used in watches, cameras, games and toys. They may, if swallowed, stick in the throat or stomach, causing serious burns as the chemical leaks out.



### **SAFETY TIP #3: NEVER LEAVE ALCOHOL UNATTENDED WHEN SMALL CHILDREN ARE AROUND.**



Be sure that glasses containing alcoholic beverages are emptied immediately after use; don't wait until the morning after a party. Ask your guests not to leave their alcoholic beverages unattended if young children are nearby. Store alcohol in a locked cabinet out of sight and reach. Even a small amount of alcohol can be deadly to a small child.

**SAFETY TIP #4: KEEP PLANTS OUT OF THE REACH OF YOUNG CHILDREN.**

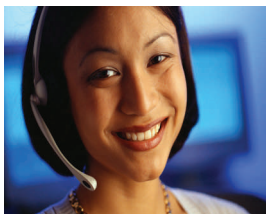
Babies & toddlers are attracted to plants, especially colorful berries and soft leaves. Poinsettias were once thought to be toxic but are now widely accepted as non-toxic. However, like any plant, they could pose a choking hazard or irritation to the mouth and throat. Holiday plants such as mistletoe, holly berries, bulbs (such as paperwhites), or Jerusalem Cherry could be toxic if swallowed.

**SAFETY TIP #5: STAY ALERT TO TOY RECALLS**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) continues to uncover toys in our stores that contain unsafe amounts of lead, cadmium, or other toxic substances. Sign up to receive free notice of all recalls: [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). Of particular concern are figurines and cheap metal jewelry items, particularly those made in China.

**SAFETY TIP #6: PROTECT FIDO AND FLUFFY, TOO!**

Many things that are not harmful for humans to eat are poisonous to pets even in small amounts, including: chocolate, ibuprofen, and lilies. Visit the website of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) for a complete list, poison prevention tips, and other valuable holiday safety tips for pet owners: [www.aspca.org](http://www.aspca.org).

**SAFETY TIP #7: KEEP THE POISON CENTER HOTLINE NUMBER NEAR EVERY PHONE. CALL RIGHT AWAY IF YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE HAS BEEN POISONED: 1-800-222-1222.**

The Blue Ridge Poison Center is open 24 hours every day including holidays, nights, and weekends. Your call is free and confidential. The poison center is staffed by nurse specialists and medical toxicologists.

Often, callers can be guided to administer first aid at home without a trip to the doctor.

Don't wait for symptoms to develop. Call 1-800-222-1222 **right away** if someone:

- Swallowed something they shouldn't have swallowed.
- Made a mistake with their prescription or over-the-counter medications.
- Breathed a poison.
- Spilled or sprayed a poison on their skin or in their eyes.

**THE BLUE RIDGE POISON CENTER WISHES YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES A HEALTHY HOLIDAY AND A NON-TOXIC NEW YEAR!**