

[www.upstatepoison.org](http://www.upstatepoison.org)

**50 YEARS**

# Poison Prevention

Newsletter

June 2007

Upstate Medical University • University Hospital • 750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

## Poison Proof Your Garage and Storage Shed

The Poison Center recommends keeping all poisonous products in locked cabinets up high and out of the reach of small children in and around the home and the garage as well. To a small child, the garage or storage shed can be an exciting place to explore. It can also be a toxic danger zone. Some are filled with tools and miscellaneous products that contain chemicals, which are potentially harmful if misused. Lawn and garden chemicals, pesticides, insect sprays, gasoline, washer fluid, antifreeze, and petroleum-based products are just some of the potentially poisonous products often times found. Children are at increased risk for severe effects from exposure to pesticides and other harmful substances. A child's exposure to poisons around the home can have long term, life-altering affects.

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## Child Safety in the Yard and Garden

Start at an early age to teach your child or toddler to "always ask first" before touching, tasting, or smelling anything in the garden. Even if you don't use fertilizer or pesticides, your neighbor may, and depending on weather conditions, wind or rain can carry these chemicals beyond the area to which they were applied. So, before eating fruits or vegetables from your garden, be sure to teach your child to wash them first.

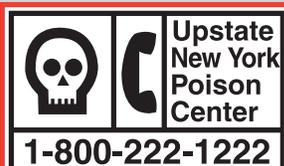
Landscaping can make the yard look beautiful but be aware of the potential dangers for young children.

- Call or visit your local garden center to identify the names of the plants growing in and around your home. For a list of some common poisonous plants, visit our website at [www.upstatepoison.org](http://www.upstatepoison.org)
- Avoid planting spiny plants and plants with thorns that could harm a child especially in or around the play area.
- If you use a fertilizer, decorative mulch or gardening soil, be aware that some of these products may contain lead or other toxic substance and should never be consumed.

Garden chemicals can be very dangerous if mishandled. This includes organic pesticides.

- Store garden chemicals in locked cabinets and in their original containers.
- Never use empty food or drink containers for storing pesticides, cleaning products or fertilizers.

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**Poison emergency?  
Poison information?  
Call Us!**

**Visit us on the web:  
[www.upstatepoison.org](http://www.upstatepoison.org)**

# Keeping the Yard and Garden Safe for Pets

Many common garden products can be poisonous, or even fatal, to dogs and other pets. Slug pellets are poisoned cereal chunks used as bait to attract slugs. Unfortunately they also attract dogs, birds and beetles, causing death or injury if consumed in large amounts.

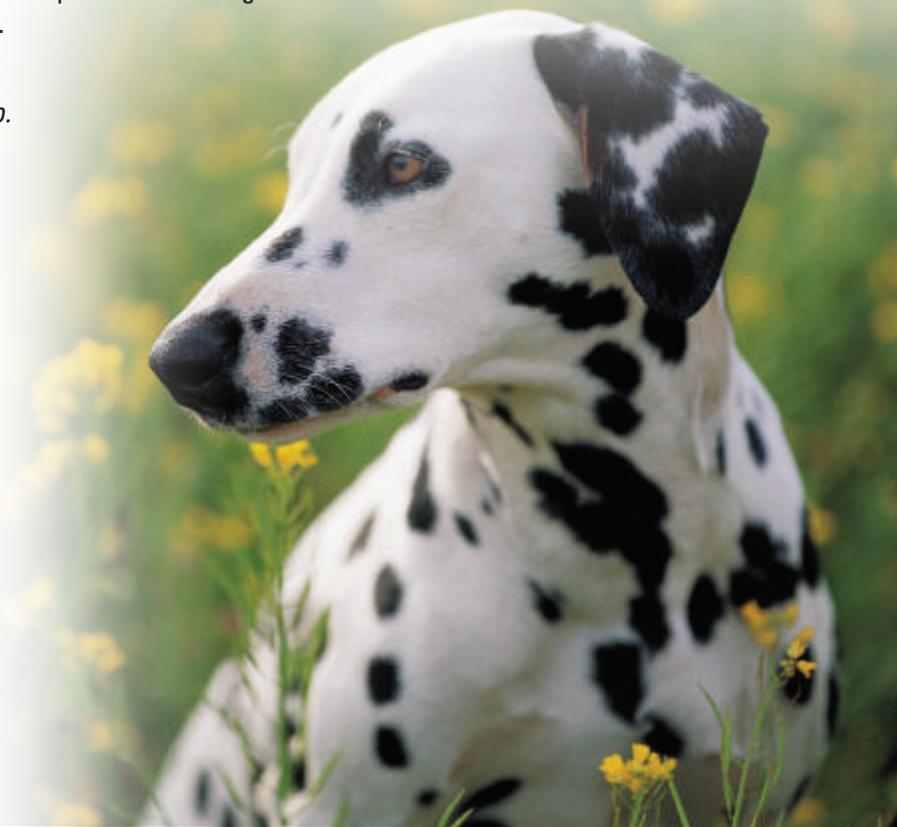
Weedkillers are pesticides that should be used with caution. Read the instructions carefully and keep these products well away from animals. Some weedkillers claim to be pet-safe. Be sure to check the small print, as this applies only after they have dried, so animals may need to be kept away for several hours after application.

Plants and flowers around the yard and in the garden are attractive and often smell good. However, keep in mind they can often be toxic if ingested.

Some of the most common plants which can be poisonous to dogs and range from mildly toxic to very poisonous.

- Foxglove - *Digitalis purpurea*
- Water Hemlock or Cowbane - *Cicuta spp.*
- Yew - *Taxus cuspidate*
- Oleander - *Nerium oleander*
- Lily of the Valley - *Convallaria majalis*
- Poison Hemlock - *Conium maculatum*
- Destroying Angels - *A. verna* (Type of Mushroom)

If you suspect your dog has eaten slug pellets or been exposed to any other toxic substance, contact your vet immediately. You can also call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435 or visit their website at [www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org).



## Child Safety in the Yard and Garden

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- Keep children away from the area while pesticides are applied.
- Take necessary precautions during and after using pesticides to be sure children do not have access to the products.

Most importantly, always keep the number for the Poison Center easily accessible. Take time to post a Poison Center phone sticker or magnet in the garage, storage shed or any location where hazardous products are stored. If you would like stickers or magnets sent to your home call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. Our goal is to prevent poisonings before they happen.



# Mercury in Compact Fluorescent Light Bulbs

Recently we have seen an increase in the promotion of the Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs as a response to fighting global warming while saving energy. As interest in "green technologies" and sustainable environmental energy resources grows, the traditional light bulb, may become a thing of the past, as consumers switch to the lower energy, longer lasting CFL bulbs.

CFLs contain a very small amount of mercury, a potential neurotoxin, a poison that acts specifically on nerve cells. The mercury in CFLs is in vapor and powder form. While CFLs are normally safe, if the bulb breaks there is a potential for exposure to a small amount of the gas and powdered residue. There is limited cause for concern as the amount of mercury in a single bulb is minimal. However, if a CFL bulb does break the EPA recommends the following clean up and disposal guidelines:

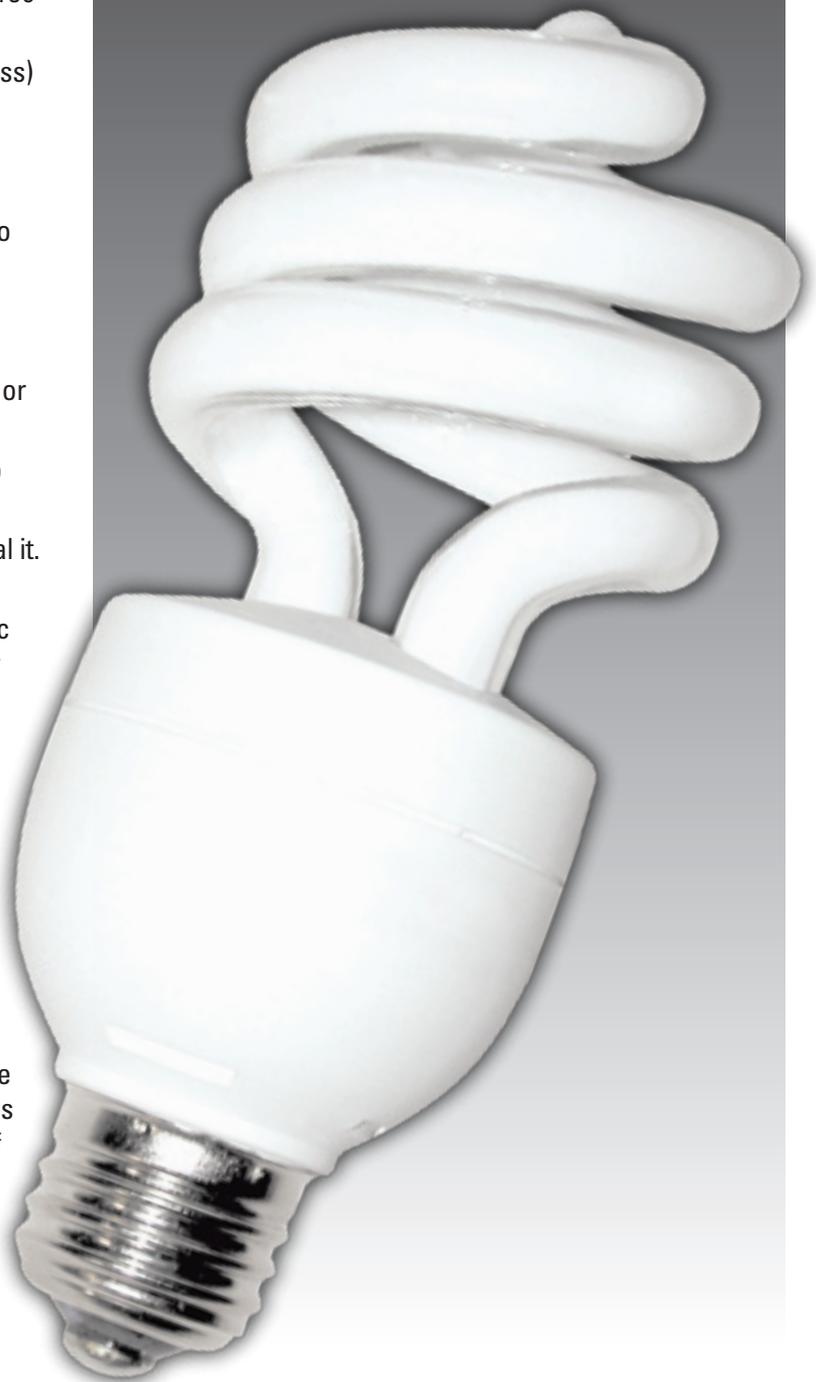
1. Open a window and leave the room (restrict access) for at least 15 minutes.
2. Remove all materials you can without using a vacuum cleaner.
  - Wear disposable rubber gloves, if available (do not use your bare hands).
  - Carefully scoop up the fragments and powder with stiff paper or cardboard.
  - Wipe the area clean with a damp paper towel or disposable wet wipe.
  - Sticky tape (such as duct tape) can be used to pick up small pieces and powder.
3. Place all cleanup materials in a plastic bag and seal it.
  - If your state permits you to put used or broken CFLs in the garbage, seal the CFL in two plastic bags and put into the outside trash (if no other disposal or recycling options are available).
  - Wash your hands after disposing of the bag.
  - The first time you vacuum the area where the bulb was broken, remove the vacuum bag once done cleaning the area (or empty and wipe the canister) and put the bag and/or vacuum debris, as well as the cleaning materials, in two sealed plastic bags in the outdoor trash or protected outdoor location for normal disposal.

As mercury is considered a hazardous waste, the larger problem is related to safe disposal. Federal officials encourage you to visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org) to find drop off locations in your area. Additionally, you can contact your county resource and recovery agency for specific disposal of hazardous wastes in your county.

Source: <http://www.epa.gov/mercury/spills/>

## Proper Disposal of Other Household Products that Contain Mercury

- Fever thermometers that contain mercury should be recycled.
- Bring old thermostats, silent wall switches, fluorescent light bulbs, and other mercury-containing products to a recycling collection site.



### How you can help protect children:

- Look at your home and garage from a child's view. Be sure potentially dangerous substances are stored out of reach and out of sight
- Always store items in their original containers. Many dangerous items can be attractive to children and may look good enough to eat or drink
- Practice the habit of putting products away right after you use them. Leaving items out while you answer the phone, mow the lawn, or perform some other task provides an opportunity for an unintentional exposure
- Don't assume that neighbors, babysitters, grandparents or other caregivers have childproofed their homes and garages. Help guide them through the process

- Check to make sure the yard or garden is clear of children and toys before using pesticides and fertilizers. Chemical residues can remain on toys for days and be unintentionally ingested or absorbed by children who handle them

### What to do if your child is exposed:

- If you think your child has been exposed to a poisonous substance, call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 or call your doctor or 911 immediately
- Have product information from the label within easy access as well as information about the child's age, gender, height and weight and symptoms, if any

**Sources:** *American Academy of Pediatrics, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Children's Environmental Health Network*

## Unintentional Poisoning Can Happen To You..At Any Age!

To receive your FREE telephone stickers, magnets, and information brochures, dial 1-800-222-1222 ask for the Health Educator at The Upstate New York Poison Center.