



Poison Prevention

Newsletter

December 2014

UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY • 750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210



Holiday Gift Giving

During the holiday season, we often include plants in our gift giving list.

If you are thinking of giving a plant to a family with small children check with the florist to be sure it is non-toxic before bringing it to a home where children or pets might have easy access to a...poisoning.

Plants to avoid:

Mistletoe is an evergreen plant with white berries. Swallowing the berries and leaves can cause some combination of diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain and cramping, even blurred vision or blood pressure changes.

Holly is an evergreen shrub that can grow to almost tree size. Leaves are stiff with sharp edges. The red berries are hard to the touch. Swallowing more than just a couple of berries can cause an upset stomach, vomiting and diarrhea. Drowsiness and dehydration may also occur.

Amaryllis in bloom is commonly found in homes during the holidays. The bulbs are the most toxic but even eating leaves can be harmful.

Jerusalem Cherry is of the nightshade family of plants. It has small, round, red and orange fruit. Swallowing berries and possibly the leaves can cause abdominal pain and cramping, which can result in vomiting, diarrhea. However, more serious reactions have also been recorded, such as drowsiness and slowed breathing.

Cyclamen persicum and **coum** bloom from winter to spring, dormant in the summer. The tubers on this species can cause nausea or vomiting. Some varieties of this plant can cause convulsions or paralysis. Be sure to ask

your florist if the plant you are buying is toxic.

Poinsettia:

While touching the milky substance in the stem of the plant could cause a slight rash, but overall poinsettias are not considered to be a toxic plant.

So when gift shopping, consider giving a non-toxic plant to those with small children. Some suggestions include: Christmas cactus, African

violet, Boston fern, bamboo and yes, even a poinsettia plant.

Keep your children safe this holiday season by keeping dangerous items, including plants up and out of their reach.

However, if a child should ingest any of these plants, call the Upstate New York Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. The poison information specialists will provide the best treatment options available.

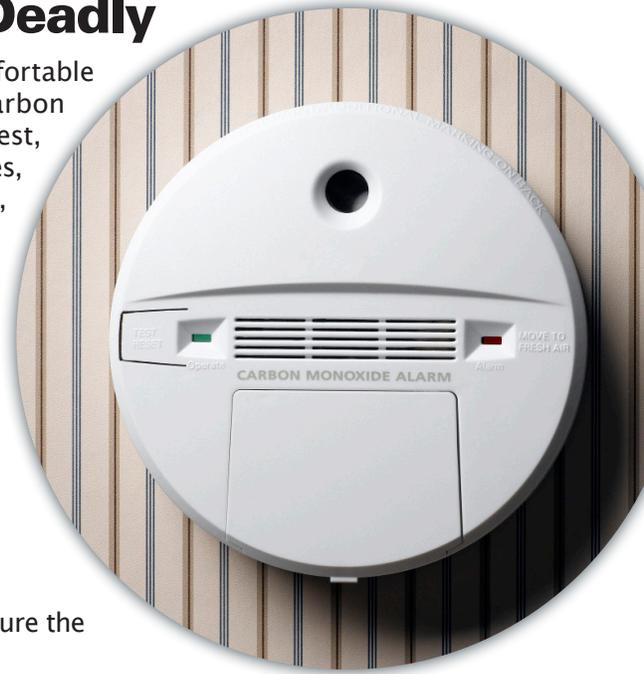
Cyclamen



Carbon Monoxide: Odorless and Deadly

As you rely on furnaces and fireplaces to keep your houses at comfortable temperatures, be sure to keep your heating sources safe to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning, a leading cause of death in America. At its mildest, carbon monoxide poisoning can feel a little like the flu – causing headaches, dizziness, exhaustion, confusion, fainting and vomiting. But at its worst, exposure to carbon monoxide can be fatal.

- Have fuel heating equipment and chimneys inspected by a professional. When using a fireplace, open the flue for adequate ventilation.
- Never use your oven or gas grill to heat your home, garage, closed-in porch, hunting cabin/tent.
- Install CO alarms, with battery back up, in your home. Consider installing one on every level and replace detectors every seven years.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if the garage door is open. Make sure the exhaust pipe is not covered in snow.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow build up.
- Never use a generator inside your home – not even in the basement, garage or porch. Keep it outside, away from windows, doors and vent openings.



Grandparents' Medicines

Accidental poisonings from medicine cause more emergency room visits for young children each year than do car accidents, and one big reason may be that grandparents often store their prescription drugs in places easy for their grandkids to reach.

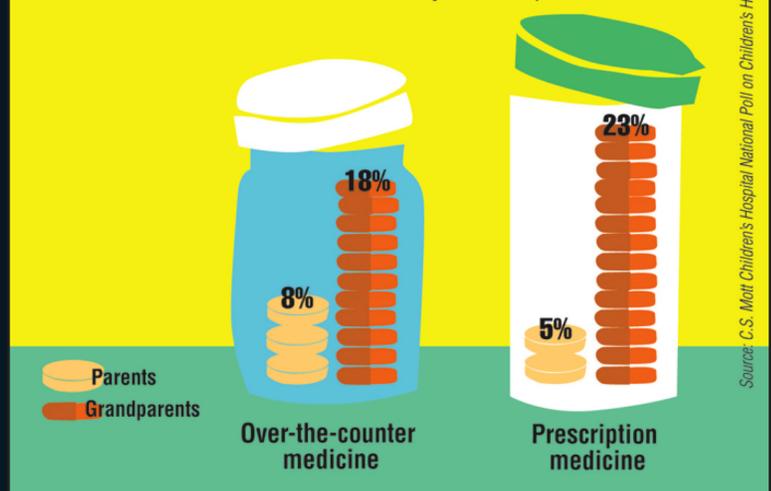
A 2012 survey conducted on children's health by the C.S. Mott Children's asked parents and grandparents of children 1-5 years old about medicines in their homes and how they store those medicines. They also asked respondents if they would support requirements for different types of packaging for medicines to reduce risks for children. In their findings:

- Overall, 79% of parents and 85% of grandparents of young kids report having prescription medicine at home.
- Grandparents are 4 times more likely than parents to keep prescription medicine in easy-access places.
- About two-thirds of adults overall would support potential new laws that would require medicines to be packaged as single-dose servings.

Grandparents are much more likely than parents to report that they store medicine in places or situations that young children can easily access. Therefore, parents and grandparents are reminded that a "child-proof" top only slows kids down. However, to be most effective even given its limitations, the top must be screwed on tightly after every use. If medicines are taken out of their original containers and stored in pill boxes, it becomes even more critical to keep these pill boxes up, away and out of the reach of children.

Source: <http://mottnpch.org/reports-surveys/easy-access-medicines-poisoning-risk-kids-home>

Figure 1. Proportions of parents & grandparents of young children who store medicines in easy-access places





The staff at the Upstate New York Poison Center wishes you a safe and enjoyable holiday season. If you have any concerns or questions, please call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. The phone is always answered by poison information specialists, registered nurses trained in toxicology, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The number is available to health care professionals and the general public for both poison information and emergencies.



Poison Proof Your Home for the Holidays

You can prevent poisonings if you...

- "Poison Proof" your home
- Use and store products safely
- Read the label
- Choose products carefully
- Know what to do when a poisoning occurs

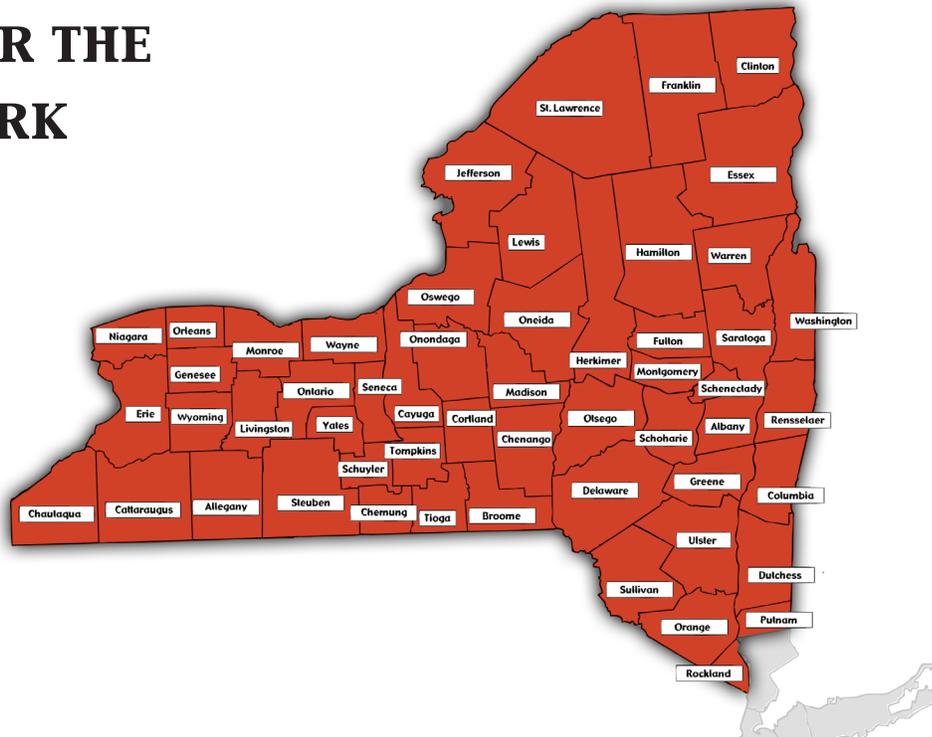
Is your home safe?

- Visit our website at www.upstatepoison.org.
- Click on "Kid's Stuff" and then on Mellie and Zipper's Checklist in the pull down menu.
- When checking this list, be sure each room in your home is poison safe.
- Properly close the tops on all potentially poisonous products and store them out of the sight and reach of children.

SERVICE AREA FOR THE UPSTATE NEW YORK POISON CENTER



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

Please visit our website at www.upstatepoison.org for a more poison resources, including brochures, posters, archived newsletters and...



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