



Poison Prevention

Newsletter

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

Winter Warnings

As winter approaches, the Upstate New York Poison Control Center offers these tips for staying safe this season:

Dry Ice/Ice Melt

Ice melting products are often used (i.e. salt) on driveways and sidewalks to prevent slipping. Care must be taken to avoid skin contact with solid pieces of dry ice or with pieces that might be ingested. Skin contact can cause tissue damage, and burns to the mouth can occur from contact or ingestion. Consider using sand sold for sandboxes instead.

Hydrocarbons

Hydrocarbons such as lamp oil and pine oil cleaner are extremely dangerous if ingested. When aspirated into the lungs, pneumonia-like symptoms may result and can be potentially fatal. The colored lamp oils are often appealing to children. Be sure to keep up high and out of reach in a locked cabinet. Always keep child-resistant caps closed properly.

Car Products

Car products like antifreeze and windshield wiper fluid can be very dangerous if swallowed, and can result in death. Be sure to keep these products in original, child resistant containers and out of reach of children or pets.

Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 right away if you think someone has tasted or swallowed one of these products.

The Poison Center Wishes You a Holly, Jolly Holiday!

During the holidays, most people plan to call distant family and friends but do not plan to call their poison center. However, poisonings can and do happen because of changes in routine and increased distractions caused by the festivities. Children may have access to more substances such as Christmas plants, decorations and visitors' medications.



If you are traveling for the holidays or having people in your home, be sure to keep suitcases and purses out of the reach of children and pets. They often contain medicine and other toxic substances such as:

- Mouthwashes, liquid hand sanitizers, perfumes and colognes which may contain alcohol. Even small amounts can affect a child.
- Personal care products, like toothpaste and soaps, which can cause vomiting or diarrhea.
- Eating even small amounts of tobacco products can be harmful causing nausea, vomiting and potentially seizures.
- Watches, cameras, hearing aids, games and calculators may contain button batteries (flat, coin-like batteries). If eaten, button batteries usually pass through the body in the stool, but sometimes they get stuck in the throat or stomach, which can cause blockage or serious burns.
- Some foil and colored gift-wrap contains lead. Be sure to read product labels and do not let pets and children chew on these items.
- Chocolate is poisonous to dogs. Darker chocolate is more harmful than milk chocolate. The chocolate can cause excited behavior, muscle tremors, fast heart beat and even seizures.

Tobacco products can be a serious ingestion for children. Two cigarettes, ingested by a child, can mean a trip to an Emergency Department.

Common holiday plants include mistletoe, holly, jerusalem cherry, poinsettia and Christmas cactus. Most can cause symptoms if swallowed by small children or pets.

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The New Kids on the Block

By Alexander Garrard PharmD

Many of us may be familiar with the more classic drugs of abuse such as heroin, cocaine, PCP (also known as Angel's Dust), amphetamines and marijuana. And although these substances still exist, there are many new drugs that plague our young adults and teenagers. Unfortunately, the legal system has a difficult time keeping up with these emerging drugs of abuse since many new agents are mixed on an almost daily basis and they're legal in most states.

Many of these emerging drugs of abuse have some unique qualities and quirks.

Synthetic marijuana is a new drug that has been on the market for a little over a year now in the United States. It can be sold under many different names, such as *Spice*, *K2*, *Fusion*, and *Jeremy*. It's also marketed as an herbal incense NOT for human consumption. This gives the impression that this product is safe. It is *natural herb* and is meant to be used as incense. Unfortunately, the herbs that are contained within the products, which are not regulated, are sprayed with chemicals. They act like marijuana producing relaxation, a sense of euphoria, apathy, and an overall sense of wellbeing. Yet, despite their similarities to marijuana, they also produce symptoms that are distinctly different. Users can present with extreme agitation, anxiety, paranoia, hallucinations, and even seizures.

Bath Salts – The thought of “bath salts”, may evoke images of a relaxing spa. However, there is another form of “bath salts” which are not designed for the bathtub but are drugs that produce anything but relaxation. These

dangerous drugs are sold in smoke shops, gas stations, truck stops, and online. Under names like *White Lightning*, *Ivory Wave*, or *Charge*, these “bath salts” are actually different type of synthetic amphetamines. Snorting bath salts is a common route of exposure, and it can produce a variety of different symptoms including agitation, hallucinations, delirium, paranoia, racing heart rate, high blood pressure, and even death. These symptoms, especially the paranoia, can last for weeks and have led to suicides.

Hallucinogenic Amphetamines –The last group of emerging drugs is by far the largest and most diverse. The drugs would be considered hallucinogenic amphetamines meaning these are stimulants, which produce visual and auditory hallucinations. They go by a number of different names, usually acronyms, such as 2-CE, 2C-T-7, DMT, 5-MEO-DIPT, BZP, and TFMP. Street names include Molly, A2, Nexus, Bromo Dragonfly, and Europa just to name a few. These drugs produce all the stimulant properties of amphetamines like heart palpitations, high blood pressure, fever, and seizures. In addition though, they can produce vivid and scary hallucinations.

In summary, there are many new drugs being mixed everyday that are available to young adults that are entirely legal. It behooves parents and healthcare workers to be knowledgeable about these new agents and spread the word that they are very dangerous and can be deadly.



Toxic Household Cleaning Products

When consumers buy cleaning products they expect them to clean, sanitize, disinfect and even smell good. What they don't expect is that many are toxic and cause harm if ingested, inhaled or spray or splashed on the skin. Children are especially at risk of exposure to cleaning products.

Some of the most dangerous household products are those containing caustic ingredients. Exposure to caustics can cause severe burns through ingestion, inhalation or contact with the eyes and skin. Always read the label before using any product. There are two types of caustics you want to pay attention to; acids and alkalis (also known as bases). Look for these words when purchasing household cleaning and personal care products — these tell you the product is caustic: acid, lye (sodium/calcium hydroxide), phosphates, and lime.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has a searchable database of household products on their website that will inform you of the caustic nature of consumer products. This database links over 11,000 consumer brands to health effects from Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) provided by manufacturers and allows scientists and consumers to research products based on chemical ingredients. The database is designed to help answer the following typical questions:

- What are the chemical ingredients and their percentage in specific brands?
- Which products contain specific chemical ingredients?
- Who manufactures a specific brand? How do I contact this manufacturer?
- What are the acute and chronic effects of chemical ingredients in a specific brand?
- What other information is available about chemicals in the toxicology-related databases of the National Library of Medicine?

It is important to know the amount of "pH" in determining the caustic properties of a product. The "pH" measures a product's acidity or alkalinity based on a scale from 1 to 13. A pH of 1 to 2 indicates a strong acid; a pH of 12–13 indicates a strong base; a pH of 7 indicates a neutral product — neither acid nor base — like water.

The stronger an acid or base, the more potential for causing severe burns upon contact. The likelihood of a serious burns depends on the pH, the amount of the product involved in an exposure and the duration of contact with the product.

Always call your physician or the Poison Center if an exposure occurs.

Products

Strong caustics
Oven cleaners
Drain openers
Rust removers
Toilet bowl cleaners
Mildew stain removers
Industrial cleaning products
Cement
Soldering flux
Battery contents (household and car)
Hair perms and relaxers
Moderate caustics
Automatic dishwashing detergents
Household disinfectants

Sources: http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_279.cfm, <http://hpd.nlm.nih.gov/cgi-bin/household/prodtree?prodcats=Inside+the+Home>

Cold and Flu Season

If you or someone in your family gets sick, use a digital thermometer and remain with children when taking their temperature. Avoid using glass mercury thermometers, which can easily break and produce fumes that are poisonous if inhaled. If mercury is spilled or ingested, call your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222 for advice on proper clean-up procedures and safety measures. Additionally, when treating the common cold and flu, be sure to keep medicines in their original container with a tight cap, and keep them locked up and away from children. Take special precautions with medications that taste, smell, or look like candy or drinks, and never take medicine in the dark. Read and follow all directions and warnings on medicine labels before taking them, and speak to a doctor about all medications (prescribed or over-the-counter) to avoid unintentional overdoses or product mixing.

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- **Mistletoe:** Swallowing berries and leaves can cause an upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. Rash can result if touched. Larger amounts may cause more serious effects.
- **Holly:** Swallowing the berries and leaves can cause an upset stomach, vomiting and diarrhea. Drowsiness and dehydration (dryness resulting from loss of water) can occur if large amounts are swallowed.
- **Jerusalem cherry:** Swallowing berries and possibly the leaves can upset the stomach and cause vomiting, diarrhea, or headache. Larger amounts can cause drowsiness or increased activity.
- **Poinsettia:** Touching the milky substance in the stem of the plant may cause a slight rash. Generally however, poinsettias are not considered "poisonous".
- **Christmas cactus:** This plant is not poisonous.



Keep your children safe this holiday season by keeping dangerous items up and out of the reach of children.

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.