



Poison Prevention

Newsletter

December 2017

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

www.upstatepoison.org

60 YEARS

What NOT to Give for Christmas

Whether buying a decoration for your home or in giving a gift, be aware that some popular holiday plants can be poisonous, especially to children and pets.

Holly

Generally as few as 2 holly berries can cause nausea but more could produce more significant symptoms. Eating holly berries is a serious concern for pets too, as the same alkaloid found in chocolate (which many know is dangerous for dogs) is also found in holly berries but at a higher concentration. Based on calls to poison centers the berries are the part most commonly eaten but the bark, leaves, and seeds are toxic too.

Poinsettia

The poinsettia, a common gift at the holidays, had gotten a bad reputation over the years, but as the Upstate New York Poison Center reports...is not on the toxic plant list. In a few leaves are eaten, you could feel ill, perhaps even vomit. Sap from the plant could produce a rash on your skin. However, this plant is not likely to be toxic to either humans or pets.

Mistletoe

Mistletoe is actually a name given to one of several plants but mistletoe is potentially dangerous for kids and pets. The toxin in the plant can cause blurred vision, nausea, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Although the combination of chemicals in each species may differ,

all parts of the mistletoe plant are poisonous, though it is the berries that may be most attractive to kids. Eating 1-2 berries probably will not cause a problem for a child, but a small pet could be poisoned by eating a few leaves or berries. If your child eats mistletoe, call the poison center for help.

The stately amaryllis plant is a common holiday gift as are the daffodil, and narcissus. Eating the bulbs (and leaves, though less toxic) can cause stomach pain or cramping, irregular heartbeats, or convulsions. Also be sure not to put these plants within the reach of pets.

Bonsai Tree

As many gardeners know, the bonsai tree is actually not one type of tree but rather is a small tree that is shaped by wires to redirect growth. The most toxic of the bonsai trees is the sago palm tree and is highly toxic to cats and dogs. All parts are poisonous but seeds are the most toxic. Within 15 a cat can show symptoms such as drooling, vomiting or diarrhea. Within a couple of days, more severe symptoms appear. Ingestion of any portion of the sago palm can be deadly. Even with treatment survival rate is around 50%. Some other less toxic types are: baby jade, cherry, Norfolk

pine and azaleas. However, perhaps an alternative gift might be in order for families with young children and pets.

Cyclamen

This is another flowering plant seen around the winter holidays. As cyclamen has a bitter taste, this plant is more of a concern for pets than humans but good to keep all plants out of the reach of pets and children.

Pines

Cedar, pine, and firs tree can be mildly toxic. The bigger concern is in eating the needles, which could then block the airway or puncture part of the gastrointestinal tract. Some people can have an allergic reaction to the oil found in these trees. Flame retardants sprayed on a tree can also impact the level of toxicity.

Jerusalem Cherry

Jerusalem cherry is a species of the nightshade family, which many can identify as a toxic plant. The primary poison is an alkaloid, which can cause stomach upset and vomiting in people, but generally is not life-threatening. However, the fruit, which resembles a cherry tomato both in appearance and

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IN A POISON EMERGENCY, EVERY SECOND COUNTS.



1

47%

Of calls are
about children <6

POISON HELP LINE

Poisonings are the leading cause of injury-related death in America. Someone calls a poison center every 11 seconds.

OPIOIDS

Opioids (including prescription opioids and heroin) killed more than 33,000 people in 2015, more than any year on record.

2



50%

Of all opioid
overdose deaths
involved a
prescription
opioid

3



64%

Increase in cannabinoid exposures in kids <12 reported to poison control from 2011 to 2015

MARIJUANA

In at least one state that has legalized marijuana, annual poison control pediatric marijuana cases increased more than 5-fold from 2009 to 2015.

LAUNDRY DETERGENT PACKETS

From 2013 through 2016, poison control centers managed over 46,000 cases of potential liquid laundry detergent packet poisonings in children 5 and under.

4



99%

Increase in liquid laundry detergent packet exposures in kids <5 reported to poison control from 2012 to 2015

Answers to your poison questions at
your fingertips.

Laundry Pods

In 2017, through September 30, poison centers received reports of 8,307 exposures to highly concentrated packets of laundry detergent by children 5 and younger.

Kudos to Proctor and Gamble for taking steps to reduce the risk of toxic exposure to their laundry pods by redesigning the detergent's packaging. To open the bottle, you have to squeeze the side tabs on the lid and then twist it. The new closures have a wide top that is difficult for a small hand to grasp, and more difficult for that same small hand to then turn, similar to a prescription bottle. The top is easier to close, by screwing the lid back on the tabs snap and lock into place.

The redesign is definitely a step in the right direction but be aware that neither the pod nor its contents have changed and therefore they are still a threat to both children and adults as well. Calls to poison centers reported children exposed to this product often had excessive vomiting, wheezing and gasping. Additionally, breathing problems were reported, serious enough to require a ventilator. Corneal abrasions to the eyes have also been reported. Bottom line, great first steps but remember to keep this product way up and out of the reach of children!



What NOT to Give for Christmas

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flavor, is extremely toxic to dogs and cats and even some birds. Kids and pets have been known to eat enough to cause illness, or in the case of pets, ingestion can even lead to death.

So in your gift giving this year, think first before you decide which plant to give.

Consider whether the home has young children and/or pets. If so, perhaps a non-toxic plant might be the best solution. Make it a poison-safe holiday by selecting a non-toxic choice such as Christmas cactus, African violet, Begonia, Jade plant or Coleus. Enjoy your holiday season.



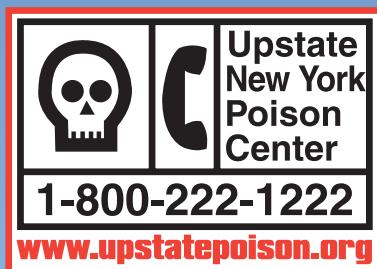
Program your cell phone

1-800-222-1222



You just may save a life!

**A Poisoning Can
Happen to **You!****



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