

Poison Prevention

Newsletter

September 2020

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210



Back to School Has A New Meaning

Covid-19 has impacted every aspect of our lives.

This fall, the stress of “going back to school” strikes fear into the hearts of most families these days especially considering the new configurations for learning including in-school learning, online learning or some hybrid model. With more students learning at home and even neighborhood students joining pods in one home, it is more important than ever to keep your homes safe from the Covid-19 virus.

Unfortunately, over the course of this pandemic, misinformation has been generated about using disinfectants, bleach, cleaning products and hand sanitizers to keep your homes and families safe. So, who can you trust

and where can you turn for the right information?

While we cannot help you with schooling options for your children, the Upstate New York Poison Center is your resource for all things related to poisons, whether in a poison emergency or for poison prevention information.

Mandated by NYS, the Upstate New York Poison Center is accredited by the American Association of Poison Control Centers and our information is updated regularly based on US trends in morbidity (the rate of poisonings) and mortality (those dying from poisoning). Registered nurses and pharmacists are ready to take your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

In preparing for the school year, the poison center has important information about using products in your home safely.

Hand sanitizers

These products are now being used by most of the population. Generally, hand sanitizers contain ethyl alcohol, which will kill the Covid-19 virus but can be dangerous when ingested by a child. However, some hand sanitizers now sold in the US include methyl alcohol also known as methanol. Methanol is not approved by the FDA for use in any hand sanitizers and can be deadly if ingested. Most of these methanol products are imported from Mexico but recently some added to the list are being made in the US. Unfortunately, as methanol will not be listed on the labels of these hand sanitizers (whether or not in the product). The only way to tell if you have a bootlegged version is to visit the FDA website to compare the name and manufacturer on the bottle in your possession to those listed at the FDA website. <https://bit.ly/2Emas38>

Prevention tips for hand sanitizers:

- Always check the label of your product and compare it with the FDA list (link above)
- Don't hand over bottles of sanitizers to young children as they may put it in their mouths which could result in a poisoning

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Smoking, Vaping, and Coronavirus

Research by Stanford University, published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* in August 2020, studied the connection between youth vaping and Coronavirus exposure.

Vaping has gained popularity among adolescents. The CDC reports that teen vaping surged to more than 1 in 4 high school students in 2019. A federal survey showed 27.5% of high school students had used an e-cigarette in the 30 days prior to the survey. (CDC 2019)

Combining the elements of smoking, vaping and the coronavirus and you have a recipe for serious health problems. The Stanford study found that when tested for the coronavirus, youth who vaped were five to seven times more likely to be infected than those who didn't vape.

"Young people may believe their age protects them from contracting the virus or that they will not experience symptoms of COVID-19, but the data show this isn't true among those who vape," according to the study's author, Bonnie Halpern-Felsher, professor of pediatrics at Stanford's School of Medicine.

The study reported that teens who had used both cigarettes and e-cigarettes in the previous 30 days were almost five times as likely to experience COVID-19 symptoms, such as coughing, fever, tiredness and difficulty breathing as those who never smoked or vaped.

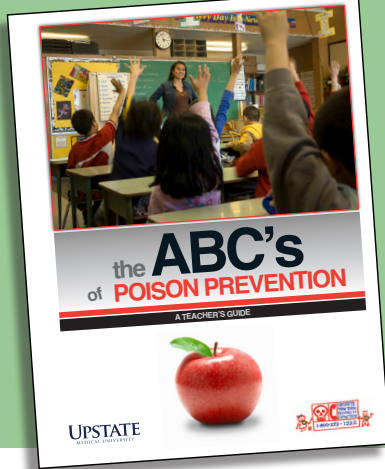
Among the participants who were tested for COVID-19, those who had ever used e-cigarettes were five times more likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19 than nonusers. Those who had used both e-cigarettes and conventional cigarettes in the previous 30 days were 6.8 times more likely to be diagnosed with the disease. The researchers did not find a connection between COVID-19 diagnosis and smoking conventional cigarettes alone, guessing that is because the prevalent pattern among youth is to use both vaping devices and traditional cigarettes. "Other research has shown that nearly all nicotine-using youth vape, and some also smoke cigarettes, but very few use cigarettes only", Halpern-Felsher said.



Research confirms that smoking is hazardous to health. Although vaping, an alternative nicotine delivery system has been promoted as a safer alternative, it is not safe. Studies show that the chemicals used to create the vaping oil, or juice as it's known, causes scarring in the lungs, a condition called "popcorn lung." Vaping can also cause "wet lung", a condition where the lung tissue becomes inflamed and the body can't receive adequate oxygen. Breathing becomes difficult.

This study shows that vaping is linked to a substantially increased risk of COVID-19 among teenagers and young adults. The author warned that if you are vaping, you are putting yourself at higher risk for Covid-19 and other lung diseases.

For more information and handouts for students and parents visit our website at www.upstate.edu/poison. Be sure to google within our site for "vaping".



Whether you are teaching children at home, in a classroom, online or in a hybrid setting during this pandemic be sure to review our Teacher's Guide for poison safety information to share with your students.

Our Teacher's Guide contains lesson plans and corresponding activities for teachers working in pre-school through grade 3. Lessons designed for babysitters have been added as well as additional activity sheets, a poison safety checklist and a Poison Ranger certificate, for use with students to recognize their efforts in course completion. **Check it out here!**

Skittles or Marijuana?

Even though marijuana is not legal in NYS, did you know that many products containing THC (the active ingredient in marijuana that causes a "high") can be purchased online no matter what state you in?

Although recreational marijuana is still not legal in many states, marketers continue to fulfill online orders for marijuana products, containing THC, including edibles.

Even advocates for marijuana realize the dangers of marketing these marijuana edibles to look like familiar candies. Many states have taken action to ban these look-alikes. To a child, a THC-laced gummy bear or skittle looks the same as the original candy. A small dose could send a child to an emergency department.



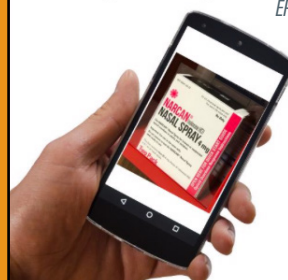
Text for Narcan

Narcan saves lives. The Erie County Department of Health and Erie County Opiate Epidemic Task Force have created a "Text for Narcan" program. Send a text to (716) 225-5473 (Erie County ONLY), include your address, and a free box of Narcan will be mailed to you – no questions asked.

**Text your request
for Narcan to
(716) 225-5473**

ERIE COUNTY ONLY

**We will
respond.**



DID YOU KNOW.....

On February 11, 2020 the World Health Organization announced an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV".

There are many types of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans.

Cleaning and Disinfectant Chemical Exposures and Temporal Associations with COVID-19

National Poison Data System, United States,
January 1, 2020–March 31, 2020

Arthur Chang, MD¹; Amy H. Schnall, MPH²; Royal Law, PhD³; Alvin C. Bronstein, MD⁴; **Jeanna M. Marraffa, PharmD⁴**; Henry A. Spiller, MS⁵; Hannah L. Hays, MD⁶; Alexandra R. Funk, PharmD⁷; Maria Mercurio-Zappala, MS⁸; Diane P. Calello, MD⁹; Alfred Aleguas, PharmD⁸; Douglas J. Borys, PharmD⁹; Tegan Boehmer, PhD¹; Erik Svendsen, PhD¹ ([View author affiliations](#)). **Weekly** / April 24, 2020 / 69(16):496–498

On April 20, 2020, this report was posted online as an MMWR Early Release. UNYPC's Assistant Clinical Director, Jeanna Marraffa, Pharm.D., FABAT, FAACT was one of the contributing authors of this seminal article. Congratulations Jeanna!

Highlights include:

January - March 2020, poison centers received 45,550 exposures.

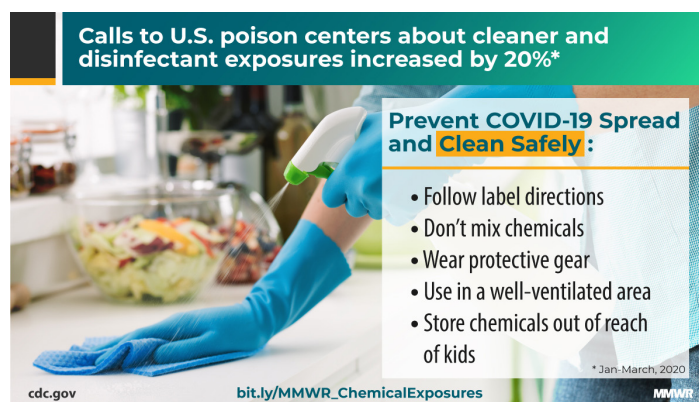
- Increase of:
 - 20.4% for cleaners (28,158)
 - 16.4% for disinfectants (17,392)

Bleaches accounted for the largest percentage of the increase (1,949; 62.1%).

Hand sanitizers (1,684; 36.7%) accounted for the largest percentages of the increase among disinfectant categories.

The increase in calls was seen across all age groups; but children aged ≤5 years represented a large percentage of total calls for each year. (Range = 39.9%–47.3%).

To read the full article: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6916e1.htm>



There appears to be an association between the increase in calls to poison centers and the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers said. Credit: CDC

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- Guide children in cleaning their hands regularly with hot soap and water
- If using hand sanitizer on the go, place only a small amount in the hands of a child
- Any hand sanitizer can be toxic to a child if ingested, due to the ethyl alcohol content
- Products with methanol can be deadly if ingested
- Store the product up, out of reach after each and every use

Cleaning Products with Bleach and Disinfectants

Covid-19 has increased the need for more cleaning, increasing the risk for more poisonings. Cleaners cut dirt and grime. Disinfectants kill germs, either bacterial or viral but generally not both. Read the label to be sure of your choice. Cleaning products, including bleach and disinfectants are meant to clean hard surfaces and are not meant to drink, eat or inject into the body or spray on skin. Not ever!

Prevention tips for cleaning:

- Read the label to find if the product is designed to clean dirt and grime or to disinfect viral or bacterial germs from hard surfaces
- Follow all directions and warnings on the label
- Be sure to open windows to protect your family from breathing in fumes during and after use
- Never mix chemicals and don't use bleach with hot water (fumes occur)

Alcohol

Liquor store sales nationwide have increased 55%. Online sales, 243%. Increased availability in the home can lead to a poisoning. Ethyl alcohol (ethanol) is found in all alcoholic drinks.

- Children love to imitate! Keep all alcohol out of the reach of children, preferably locked away.
- A child drinking alcohol can act drunk. Effects include sleepiness, slurred speech, an unsteady walk, and vomiting.
- Alcohol is also flammable. Important to keep all alcohol away from an open flame.



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