

Poison Prevention

Newsletter

September 2022

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

What is Melatonin and how does it work?



Melatonin is a hormone that your brain produces in response to darkness. It helps with the timing of your circadian rhythms (24-hour internal clock) and with sleep. Being exposed to light at night can block melatonin production. Research suggests that melatonin plays other important roles in the body beyond sleep. However, these effects are not fully understood. Melatonin dietary supplements can be made from animals or microorganisms, but most often they're made synthetically in a lab.

What are the health benefits of Melatonin?

Melatonin supplements, when recommended by your health care provider, may help with certain conditions, such as jet lag, delayed sleep-wake phase disorder, some sleep disorders in children, and anxiety before and after surgery.

Is it safe to take Melatonin?

For melatonin supplements, particularly at doses higher than what the body normally produces, there's not enough information yet about possible side effects to have a clear picture of overall safety. Short-term use of melatonin supplements at recommended doses appear to be safe for most people, but information on the long-term safety of supplementing with melatonin is lacking.

Also keep in mind:

- As with all dietary supplements, consult your health care provider before using melatonin.
- There may be a risk of allergic reactions to melatonin supplements.
- The 2015 guidelines by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommend against

melatonin use by people with dementia. Melatonin may stay active in older people longer than in younger people and cause daytime drowsiness.

- In the United States, melatonin is considered a dietary supplement. This means that it's regulated less strictly by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) than a prescription or over-the-counter drug would be. In several other countries, melatonin is available only with a prescription and is considered a drug.
- Some melatonin supplements may not contain what's listed on the product label. A 2017 study tested 31 different melatonin supplements bought from grocery stores and pharmacies. For most of the supplements, the amount of melatonin in the product didn't match what was listed on the product label. Also, 26 percent of the supplements contained serotonin, a hormone that can raise the chances of having unintended harmful effects in certain people.

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Get the facts on the Cannabis Law, find health and safety information at:

<https://cannabis.ny.gov/>



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Medication Safety Tips

In looking at the UNYPC's top 10 poisoning substances for children 5 and under, medication is always in the list. Remember, as a parent or caregiver, it is your job to keep your children safe from poisoning.

- Keep medicine in its original container with label directions and warnings to avoid confusion.
- Always buy medication with safety tops, especially if you have young children in the home.
- Safety tops do NOT prevent a poisoning but can slow children down.
- After giving or taking medicine, be sure to put the top on tightly.
- Children love to explore so keep all medicine up and out of sight and reach.
- Never store medication on a counter or on a night stand for

easy access. Hungry children often go looking for food on counters or elsewhere only to find colorful medication that can often entice a hungry child.

- Medication lock boxes can reduce the risk of poisoning.
- Change in schedule, such as a move, travel or even a holiday can distract caregivers and increase the risk of poisoning in children. An exploring child might be overlooked by a busy parent.
- Remind grandparents, friends, and other guests to remove any medicines from purses, bags, or coats. Provide a location for safe storage - up and away and out of sight.
- Teach children about medicines. It is important to teach children what medicine is and why you or another caregiver must be the

one to give it to them. Do not tell children that medicine is candy, as it encourages them to reach for it when you are not looking.

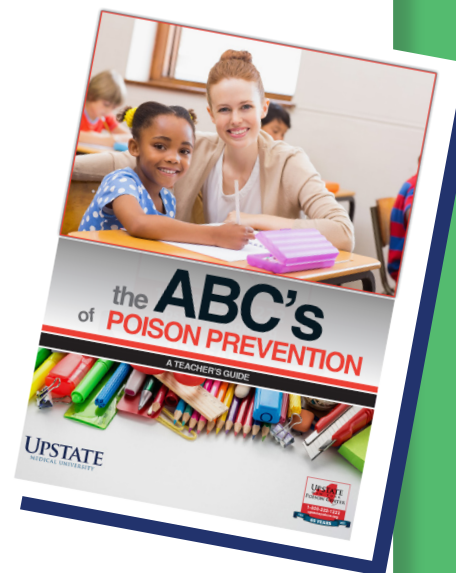
TOP 10 POISONINGS CHILDREN 5 YEARS OF AGE AND UNDER

1. Personal Care Products
2. Household Cleaning Substances
3. Analgesics
4. Foreign Bodies including toys
5. Dietary Supplements/Herbals
6. Vitamins
7. Topical Preparations
8. Plants
9. Antihistamines
10. Pesticides

Poison Prevention Teaching Tools Are Online

Many of you are already familiar with our public education materials on topics such as medication safety or carbon monoxide poisoning. But did you know many of our poison safety programs and our education materials are only a click away? No matter the audience, the Upstate New York Poison Center website has something for everyone! By downloading an Activity Sheet, you can teach your “kids” to stay away from poison. Watching an online poison video can reinforce poison prevention messaging to any audience. Teens can learn online about safe use of medication at a time in their lives when most begin to self-medicate.

This year, in addition to our extensive list of public educational offerings, the Upstate New York Poison Center is proud to announce our POISON PREVENTION TRAINING PROGRAM. The training is designed for anyone looking to teach a more in-depth review of poison safety to any audience. The plan is simple. First, take the 30-45 minute online training to learn about the services of the poison center and about all the amazing tools that accompany the program. Then you determine which tools, introduced in the training, you will select to teach your targeted audience. You don't have to be a teacher with a degree to use the program and your audience could be family members, classroom students, babysitters, scout troops or even staff members. So, if you think that poison safety information could benefit someone in your life... be sure to read all the details of the Poison Prevention Training below to see if this program may be a fit for the audience you have in mind.

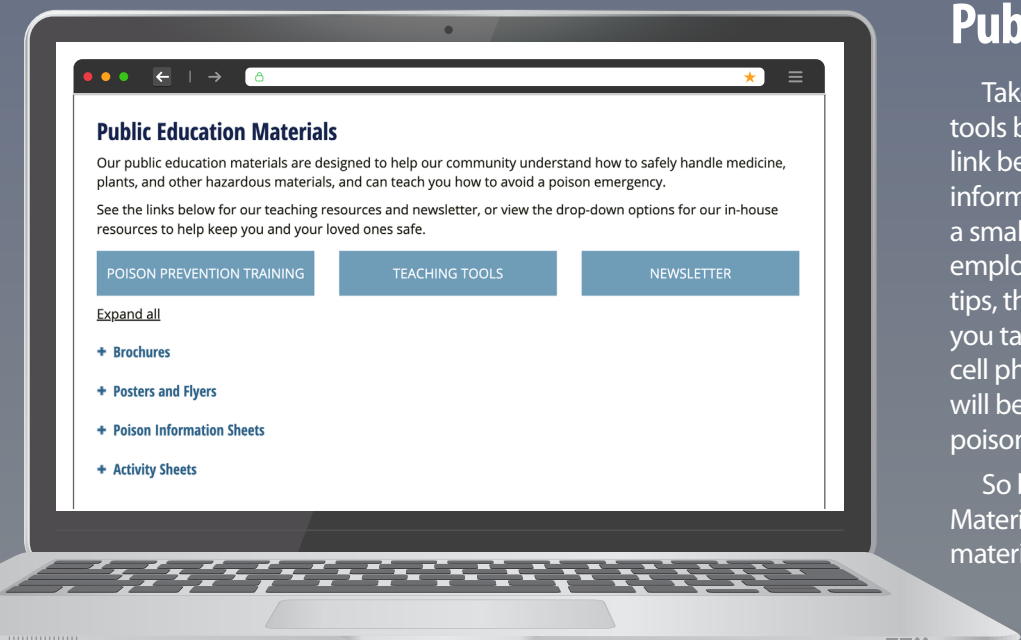


Public Education Materials

Take time to learn about all of our teaching tools by clicking the Public Education Materials link below. Whether you are hoping to find information on a topic for yourself or inform a small group of children, baby sitters or your employees about a poison center or poison safety tips, these materials are for you. If the only step you take is to encourage staff to program their cell phones with our 1-800-222-1222 number, it will be one step closer to keeping them safe from poisonings.

So be sure to click on “Public Education Materials” link below to review all the exciting materials available at our website for all ages.

<- Click on the computer to go to webpage





Is Melatonin safe for children?

In addition to issues mentioned above, there are some things to consider regarding melatonin's safety in children.

- Parents considering giving their children melatonin should first speak with a health care provider.
- Parents need to supervise to ensure safe storage and appropriate use of melatonin supplements.
- Use of over-the-counter melatonin might place children or teenagers at risk for accidental or intentional overdose.

- A 2022 study indicated that U.S. sales of melatonin—which is widely available in tablet, capsule, liquid, and gummy form—increased by about 150 percent between 2016 and 2020. The study authors indicated that the increase in sales, availability, and widespread use of melatonin in the United States has likely resulted in increased access to melatonin among children in the home.
- The 2022 study also showed that the number of reports to U.S. Poison Control Centers about people 19 years and younger who used melatonin increased from 8,337 in 2012 to 52,563 in 2021. Over the 10-year period, the number of reports increased each year. Hospitalizations and serious outcomes from melatonin ingestion by people 19 years and younger also increased over the 10 years.

Melatonin supplements at normal doses appear to be safe for most children for short-term use, but there aren't many studies on children and melatonin. Short term side effects in children include: drowsiness, increased bed wetting, headache, dizziness and agitation. There's little information on the long-term effects of melatonin use in children.

If you choose to use Melatonin, or any Dietary Supplement:

- Remember, the FDA regulations for dietary supplements, such as melatonin, are different

and less strict than those for prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

- Talk with your health care provider prior to taking melatonin or any supplement, especially if you are pregnant or breast feeding or have any medical condition.
- Always read and follow label instructions.
- "Natural" doesn't always mean "safe." Store all medicine and dietary supplements out of reach and sight of children.
- Use child-resistant storage, like medicine lock-boxes, to reduce poisonings of young children. Visit our website to request a free medication lock box: (<https://www.upstate.edu/poison/poison-prevention/lockbox.php>).
- Remember, Specialists in Poison Information are available at the Upstate New York Poison Center 24/7/365 by calling 1 800 222 1222.

Resources:

1. <https://www.poisnhelp.org/2022/06/07/recent-study-shows-a-530-percent-increase-in-melatonin-overdose-in-children-what-parents-should-know-about-keeping-children-safe/>
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/71/wr/mm7122a1.htm>
3. https://www.alzdiscovery.org/uploads/cognitive_vitality_media/addf-melatonin-full-report.pdf

Note from our Medical Director:

Unintentional edible THC exposures have significantly increased in the Upstate NY region's pediatric population over the last two years.

Please be aware:

- Effects of these products can be delayed after they are swallowed.
- Many effects may occur, including: vomiting, changes in heart rate and blood pressure, difficulty breathing and altered mental status.
- Keeping edible products out of sight and out of reach may decrease unintentional pediatric exposures.
- Storing edible THC products in a medication lock box may reduce unintentional pediatric exposures.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Kicking off our 2022-23 Health Education Webinar Series

Nutritional Supplements

Thursday 9/22 • 10:00 – 11:30 am

Mary Beth Dreyer, MEd, Health Educator

Kayla Bourgeois, PharmD, Clinical Toxicology Fellow