

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Erin Wendel

202.429.7558; ewendel@APhAnet.org

Protect Your Children from Accidental Poisonings by Properly Storing and Administering Medicines

WASHINGTON, D.C. - During Poison Prevention Week, March 15-21, 2009, the [American Pharmacists Association \(APhA\)](#) is urging parents to safeguard their children against accidental medicine poisonings. APhA is part of the National Poison Prevention Council. Each year, APhA observes Poison Prevention Week to bring attention to dangers of unintentional poisonings caused by medicines by offering tips to parents on how to properly store and administer medications.

Medications are often stored or left in places easily accessible by young children. As children grow and become more curious about their surroundings, small things like a pill or a pill bottle may easily be mistaken for a toy or candy. The best defense against accidental medicine poisoning is to store all medications in a secure place that is far out of the reach of children.

“It only takes a split second for a child to be accidentally poisoned by medications kept in the home,” said John A. Gans APhA’s executive vice president and chief executive officer. “Even though most medication packaging is child proof, it doesn’t mean that children can’t and won’t find a way to access its contents.”

To keep your medicines child-safe APhA recommends the following tips:

- Never rely solely on any kind of packaging to protect kids.
- Keep all medications in child-proof cabinets or medicine cabinets that children can't reach.
- Leave prescriptions and OTC medications in its original container. This identifying information may help save the life of a child who has accidentally ingested medicine.
- Buy medicines in child-proof containers.
- Don't keep medicines in places like a diaper bag or purse where children may have access. House guests should also not leave medications in a suitcase or out in the open in a spare bedroom or bathroom.
- Don't take medications in front of children because kids imitate adults.
- Never refer to medicine as "candy."
- Talk to your pharmacist if you have questions about how to child proof your medications.
- Dispose of medications properly. Visit www.smarxtdisposal.net for more information.

Overmedicating is another reason for accidental poisonings in young children. Giving an ill or cranky child medicine may seem like a simple solution but it is not always what the doctor or pharmacist recommends. There are no simple solutions when it comes to medications. The individual needs of the child and available options must be considered. Sometimes no medicine is the best medicine, especially in young children.

APhA encourages parents to follow these guidelines when administering medications to children:

- Adult medicines are not intended to be taken by children, and they're not necessarily safe for little ones, even at lower doses.
- Choose a medicine made for children. Never give a child a medicine for adults unless the label indicates the appropriate dose for children or a doctor instructs you to do so. **Read the label!**

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NEWS RELEASE



Poison Prevention Week 2009 – Page 2 of 2...

- Before giving a cold or cough medicine to your child, talk to your pharmacist or doctor to be sure the medicine is appropriate for your child and his/her situation.
- Never administer medicine in the dark.
- Give the right dose. It's important to give your child the amount recommended on the label for his or her age and weight. Use any included dropper or cup to give the right amount so you don't risk overdosing. Kitchen spoons are not accurate. Store droppers and cups with the product for correct dosing .
- Not all children are the same and basing a dose on age can result in under or exceeding a dose.
- Post the Poison Control Center phone number (1-800-222-1222), along with other emergency numbers, including your pharmacist, pediatrician and emergency contacts by every phone in your home and enter them into your cell phone's address book.

More than 90 percent of accidental poisonings occur in the home and the majority of non-fatal poisonings occur in children younger than six years old. Something as simple as talking to your pharmacist and asking questions about how to child proof medications and/or what type of medicine is right for your child, can help reduce the more than 2 million accidental poisonings that occur each year.

For more information about Poison Prevention Week, visit www.poisonprevention.org.

About the American Pharmacists Association (APhA)

The [American Pharmacists Association](http://www.pharmacist.com), founded in 1852 as the American Pharmaceutical Association, represents more than 62,000 practicing pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists, student pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and others interested in advancing the profession. APhA, dedicated to helping all pharmacists improve medication use and advance patient care, is the first-established and largest association of pharmacists in the United States. APhA members provide care in all practice settings, including community pharmacies, health systems, long-term care facilities, managed care organizations, hospice settings, and the uniformed services.

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