

News from CPSC

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CPSC Urges New Parents to Adopt Lifesaving Routine to Prevent Child Poisonings

Poison Prevention Has Saved More Than 900 Lives Since the 1970s

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Every day thousands of new parents assume the responsibility of caring for and protecting a child. Many of these first-time caregivers are unaware of the dangers of unintentional poisonings often related to medicines and household products commonly found in the home, such as personal care products, over-the-counter pain relievers and cleaning substances.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Poison Prevention Week Council are kicking off National Poison Prevention Week (March 18-24) to educate and inform consumers of the dangers associated with unintentional poisonings.

From 2002 through 2004, about 36 children younger than 5 died each year as a result of ingesting poisonous substances found in and around the home. In 2005 about 91,000 young children visited hospital emergency rooms and more than one million calls were placed to poison control centers as a result of unintentional poisoning.

“For most first-time parents and caregivers, poison prevention messaging is new,” said CPSC Acting Chairman Nancy Nord. “It is an especially important message to understand and act upon.”

Young children are curious and use their home environment as a classroom – a place to learn and explore. Exploring for younger children is often done by mouthing objects which puts them at greater risk of unintentional poisonings. For young children who are unable to read, a bottle of orange-scented household cleaner may be mistaken for orange juice; the medicine in the pill container can look a lot like small candies; and baby oil, which can be deadly if ingested, can resemble a clear drink.

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To prevent these incidents, CPSC recommends the following safety steps:

1. Keep all household chemicals and medicines locked up, out of sight and out of reach.
2. Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container securely after each use. Some products also come in child-resistant blister cards, which avoid the need to re-secure.
3. Call 800-222-1222 immediately in case of poisoning.
4. When products are in use, never let young children out of your sight, even if you must take them along when answering the phone or doorbell.
5. Keep items in original containers.
6. Leave the original labels on all products, and read the label before using to understand correct use and dosage.
7. Do not put decorative lamps and candles that contain lamp oil where children can reach them. Lamp oil can be very toxic if ingested by young children.
8. Always turn the light on when giving or taking medicine. Check the dosage every time.
9. Avoid taking medicine in front of children. Refer to medicine as "medicine," not "candy."
10. Clean out the medicine cabinet periodically and safely dispose of unneeded and outdated medicines.

To request poison prevention publications, visit www.poisonprevention.org.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. Deaths, injuries and property damage from consumer product incidents cost the nation more than \$700 billion annually. The CPSC is committed to protecting consumers and families from products that pose a fire, electrical, chemical, or mechanical hazard. The CPSC's work to ensure the safety of consumer products - such as toys, cribs, power tools, cigarette lighters, and household chemicals - contributed significantly to the 30 percent decline in the rate of deaths and injuries associated with consumer products over the past 30 years.

To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, call CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or CPSC's teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270 or visit CPSC's Web site at www.cpsc.gov/talk.html. Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's Web site at www.cpsc.gov.

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