

# To *Your* HEALTH *Fresno County*

Bringing you public health issues and ways to improve personal, family, neighborhood and community health



## **Poison Prevention**

March 18, 2016

Unintentional poisoning is the leading cause of injury-related death in the U.S. According to the CDC about 9 of 10 accidental poisonings occur in the home, and 60% of these victims are younger than 6. Each year across North America thousands of children are treated in emergency departments after consuming poisonous substances.

Advances in poison awareness and technologies such as child-resistant packaging have been extremely effective, but new and reemerging hazards such as button cell batteries and chemicals that resemble everyday drinks make poison prevention an on-going challenge.

A large percentage of poisonings in children under 6 involve a misuse of medications. Ways to reduce risk for your family include:

- Keeping all prescription and over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbals in a safe place, out of sight of children, and where they can only be reached by those who take or give them. Don't leave them out even for very short times
- Reading all warning labels
- Only taking prescription medications that are prescribed to you, and only at the doses prescribed
- Keeping all medications in their original containers
- Securing the child safety cap completely after each use
- Never calling medicine "candy" and avoiding taking medicine in front of children
- Turning on the light when giving or taking medication
- Cleaning out medication cabinets periodically and [disposing of medications properly](#)

Other household products also pose a risk to your family, and include such things as bleach, detergents, cleaning fluids, makeup, personal care products, pesticides, and art supplies. Reduce risk by:

- Always reading labels before use
- Keeping chemical products in original containers
- Never mixing household products together
- Never letting children out of sight when these products are in use
- Installing child safety locks on cabinets
- Checking garages, basements, attics, and other storage areas regularly, and disposing of old products properly

Remember that hazardous household items can include [button batteries](#), [poisonous plants](#), [carbon monoxide](#), and [lead](#). Learn about the hazards of each of these and take appropriate steps to reduce risk.

Be prepared by putting the poison control number by or in each of your phones (1-800-222-1222). Call immediately if a poison victim is awake and alert. Call 911 if you have a poison emergency and the victim has collapsed or is not breathing. Never try to make a poison victim vomit unless instructed to do so by a health care professional.

Here's to your health!



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