

		Upstate New York Poison Center
1-800-222-1222		

Poison Prevention

Newsletter Summer 2006

 **SUNY Upstate Medical University**
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Update on Lead Poisoning in Children

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It is gratifying to note that the history of lead poisoning in children in the US has been a Public Health success. Over the past 30 years, the acceptable blood lead level has been lowered (by the CDC) to 10 mcg/dL or less. One of the main reasons for this was the marked reduction of leaded gasoline in auto emissions.

The main source of lead exposure for children still is the deteriorated paint on older homes (built prior to the 1960's). Legislation to reduce or eliminate lead in household paint became effective in most states in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Older homes retain the leaded paint, which flakes off in many areas, such as window frames and eaves, so that lead can contaminate dirt outside these homes and dust within the homes.

Young children are at most risk for exposure, due to the normal hand to mouth activity in the first few years of life.

Since lead exposure is generally asymptomatic, blood lead screening is the only way to detect elevations, and in New York State, such testing is mandated at one and two years

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Household Pesticides

The term pesticide is often misunderstood and thought to refer only to insecticides. It also applies to herbicides, fungicides, and various other products used to control pests.

Under United States law, a pesticide is also any substance or mixture of substances intended for use as a plant regulator, defoliant, or desiccant.

There are many household products that contain pesticides. According to the EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, bathrooms and kitchens were cited as the areas in the home most likely to have improperly stored pesticides. Examples of some common household pesticides found in bathrooms and kitchens include roach sprays; chlorine bleach; kitchen and bath disinfectants; rat poison; insect and wasp sprays; repellents and baits; and flea and tick shampoos and dips for pets. Other household pesticides include swimming pool chemicals and weed killers.

What is a pesticide?

A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended for:

- Preventing
- Destroying
- Repelling any pest, bacteria, viruses or fungi



Although, pesticides can cause some harm to humans, pets and the environment, there is a balance between the risks and benefits of pesticides. When used properly they can prevent more serious health risks by eliminating unwanted insects, weeds, pests and bacteria.

Read The Label First!

Carefully read the label on any product you bring into the home, the important information you should look for is:

1. How to use the product safely and effectively
2. How and where to store the product safely
3. The phone number to call for help or more information

For more information on pesticides call 1-800-858-7378 or go to www.epa.gov/pesticides. If you think someone has been exposed to a household pesticide call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

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**Poison emergency?
 Poison information?
 Call Us!
 Visit us on the web:
www.upstatepoison.org**

The Medicine Cabinet

Now that summer is around the corner you may be preparing to clean out the closets for your summer apparel. It might also be a good time to do the same in your medicine cabinet.

The products we used for our winter healthcare are often different from the ones we use during the summer which include, anti-histamines for insect bites and stings, ointments for scrapes and burns and sunscreen products. There is a good chance that there are partially used products from last year still in your bathroom. Get rid of them!

Take the time to clean out the medicine cabinet and throw away products that are out dated. Replace them with new products and make sure to separate them from products that look like other products. Keep first aid products that come in tubes like ointments away from tubes of toothpaste and other beauty and healthcare products. When possible, separate bottles that are similar in size shape and color and store them in different locations.

The "look-alike" scenario is a poison exposure waiting to happen and does, to people of all ages. We once had a call from an adult who had an upset stomach and went to the medicine cabinet looking for the "pink bottle" of over the counter medicine. He was in such a hurry he grabbed the first "pink bottle" he saw, opened it and started to drink it right from the bottle. Much to his surprise instead of Pepto-Bismol he drank calamine lotion. Fortunately, when he called the poison center the specialist was able to advise him on the proper treatment for this exposure preventing a hospital visit.

Don't wait for an unintentional exposure to happen in your home before practicing poison safety. Take the time to "investigate and separate" the products in your home and keep the number for the poison center on or near the phone. In fact you can even place a phone sticker on the inside of the medicine cabinet door!

Need phone stickers, magnets or poison prevention information? Call 1-800-222-1222 and we will be happy to send some to you today!

Poison Prevention for Pets

Pets are unpredictable. Keep your pet safe by taking simple poison safety precautions to prevent a poisoning from common toxins around your house and yard.

Household pesticides are a common source of poisonings in pets. Pet products such as shampoos and topical treatments for fleas, ticks, other parasites and certain skin conditions contain pesticides. Not following the manufacturer's directions is one of the most common causes of pet toxicity.

Take time to read all directions when using shampoos, dips, spot-on treatments, etc. for your pet. Do not use dog products on cats and vice versa because the dosing is often different. Also observe the "after treatment" directions before allowing children to handle the pet to reduce unnecessary exposure. If you have any questions on the correct usage of a pet product call your veterinarian.

Be sure to store all medications in a safe and secure location. Dogs have been known to consume large quantities of human medications such as pre-natal vitamins, ibuprofen, and vitamins. Any medication overdose is a potential emergency. If your pet should get into any potentially toxic substance call your veterinarian or Animal Poison Control at 1-888-426-4435.



Websites

Listed below are websites for more information on health and safety. If you want to share websites you have found informative and useful please call 315-464-5375 or send an email to the health educator at livermol@upstate.edu.

www.familydoctor.org

<http://www.ipl.org/div/kidspace/poisonsafe/> Internet Public Library

<http://kidshealth.org/>

<http://www.aap.org/> American Academy of Pediatricians

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/about/>

<http://npic.orst.edu> National Pesticide Information Center



Update on Lead Poisoning in Children

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of age. The test at one year establishes a base line and if elevated, intervention can help prevent continued exposure. Repeat testing at two is essential, since an acceptable blood lead level at one year of age does not guarantee an acceptable level at two years of age. The second year of life is probably the highest risk period for lead exposure, since developmentally, that is the time of increased mobility, exploration of the environment and lots of hand to mouth activity.

Who is at greatest risk for lead exposure in 2006?

- Low income children living in older housing
- Older children with developmental delay and /or autism (because of continued Pica)
- New Americans who may have been exposed to lead in their countries of origin (esp. Eastern Europe, China and Africa)
- An additional concern has recently been raised about the risk of exposure of these youngsters after they have been settled in the US. This makes the point of the importance of primary prevention for this population to insure that they are placed in homes without lead hazards.
- It is also important to keep in mind that people from different cultures often bring some of their folk remedies; cosmetics etc with them and unknowingly, these may have extensive lead content.
- Products (such as toys, jewelry and various notions) are imported into the US which have high lead content. The Consumer Product Safety Commission has a hard time keeping ahead of these hazards and providers and the public need to be made aware of the recalls.
- Rehabilitation of old homes presents a potential hazard to adults as well as the children in those homes.

The take home lessons are:

- Despite the successes we have observed, lead remains an ubiquitous element in our environment. There are multiple possible sources of exposure for children and "routine" blood lead testing of all one and two year olds must continue for the foreseeable future.
- Our long-term goal should be primary prevention of lead exposure in the first place. That would require a reorientation to testing of the possible environmental exposures (such as housing stock) and subsequent repair and rehabilitation of that stock before exposure occurs to young children. Only then will we have a chance at successfully eliminating lead poisoning as a hazard to young children in this country.

www.upstatepoison.org

You can now visit us on the web. The Central New York Poison Center's website is a wealth of information. Get the facts on poison tips, education, and more.



Sunscreen Blindness?

It seems that every year around this time an Internet urban legend is recycled regarding waterproof sunscreen. The legend has it that this product can cause blindness in children if it gets in their eyes.

“The legend is just that”, cautions Mary Claps, RN, Certified Poison Information Specialist at the Poison Center. “We don’t have any idea how these things get started but to date, there is no evidence that any waterproof sunscreens have caused blindness in any population.”

According to the Poison Center, if a child or an adult should mistakenly get waterproof sunscreen into his or her eyes, we would recommend the following treatment:

Irrigate exposed eyes with a large amount of 0.9% saline or water at room temperature for at least 15 minutes. If pain, swelling, tearing, or a low tolerance to light occurs or persists after 15 minutes of irrigation and a 15 minute rest period (as sometimes the saline solution can cause slight irritation), we would then recommend that an ophthalmologic examination be performed. copious

Remember in a poison emergency or for poison prevention information, you can always call the Poison Center, 24/7/365 for help.

