

Upstate
New York
Poison
Center

1-800-222-1222

www.upstatepoison.org



Poison Prevention

Newsletter

September 2007

SUNY Upstate Medical University
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Flavored Medicine

One of the most common reasons for an unintentional poison exposure is that a child thought medicine "looked like" candy and ate it. Medicine often does look like candy, as the size, shape and colors of pills can be very similar to a candy treat. As caregivers we also have to be aware of the "tastes like" factor when preventing unintentional exposures. Medicine can "taste like" bubble gum, fruit and other candy flavors thanks to manufactures that are now adding flavoring.

Recently a representative explained these flavorings are intended to partially mask the unpleasant taste of medicine. A study conducted with pediatric physicians showed flavored medicine increases both the chance that children will take their prescription medicine and the probability that they would complete the recommended course of medicine prescribed.

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Poisonous Mushrooms

It is Morel season! From July through November in the northeast the mushrooms are growing wild. However, you should never eat wild mushrooms unless an expert has examined them. They could be poisonous.

The most common poisonous mushrooms, and some of the most deadly, are of the genus Amanita. The common names are Monkey Agaric, Panther Cap, Death Cap, and Death Angel Mushrooms. The mushrooms range in appearance from bright orange and shiny white to red with spotted caps. In most cases you cannot tell if a mushroom is poisonous just by its color and shape. The only true way to determine if a mushroom is poisonous is to examine it under a microscope. There are many edible amanitas mushrooms but eating the wrong one can make you very sick.

Mushroom poisoning occurs when a toxin in the mushroom is absorbed from the intestine into the liver. The symptoms of mushroom poisoning can be immediate or take several hours to develop. The symptoms include feeling sick, stomach cramps, delirium, vomiting and diarrhea. The most severe cases result in liver failure and even death.

There have been news reports of this in the United States, some involving immigrants, who may have mistaken poisonous mushrooms for similar looking non-poisonous mushrooms in their homeland. Even experienced mushroom identification experts are cautious about consuming wild mushrooms because of the risk of being poisoned.

Remember too that children like to explore and touch things especially if they are brightly colored and within reach. Mushrooms found growing on the ground in forests or wooded



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**Poison emergency?
Poison information?
Call Us!**

**Visit us on the web:
www.upstatepoison.org**

Don't wait until it happens to you

Unintentional injury is the leading cause of childhood injuries and hospital visits according to the National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC.

Statistics on poison exposures reveal that consistently year after year approximately 62% of all the calls to Poison Centers are unintentional exposures to children under the age of 6.

Prevention education is the core of our public education outreach. Poison exposures are more likely to happen when a product is being used or when it is within the reach of small children. Here are some simple steps you can take to prevent an exposure from happening.

- Keep children safely out of the area when products containing harmful chemicals are being used.
- Be aware that distractions like phone calls and visitors can lead to poisoning.
- Whenever possible avoid leaving products such as cleaners, cosmetics and medicines within the reach of children.
- Immediately secure the cap on the products after using.
- Use child-resistance caps.
- Avoid taking the product out of its original container and putting it in an unmarked container.

Don't wait for an exposure to happen to you. The key is awareness, education and prevention. Be aware of the products in and around your home and the potential for a poison exposure if the product is used improperly. Understand that poisons act fast and so do children.

For more information on prevention education visit our website at www.upstatepoison.org and click on the "community" tab.

Recall in the news

Barbie Accessory Toys Recall

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), in cooperation with Mattel, has announced a voluntary recall of various Barbie accessory toys due to excessive levels of lead.

More information: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml07/07301.html>

Geo Trax Locomotive Toys Recalled Due To Violation of Lead Paint Standard

The CPSC, in cooperation with Fisher-Price, has announced a voluntary recall of Geo Trax Locomotive Toys due to excessive levels of lead.

More information: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml07/07302.html>

Fisher-Price Recalls Bongo Band Toys Due to Violation of Lead Paint Standard

Fisher-Price has also announced a voluntary recall of Big Big World 6-in-1 Bongo Band toys due to lead paint.

More information: <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/prerel/prhtml07/07303.html>

Poisonous Mushrooms

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areas under pine and oak trees can be attractive and are within the reach of children. Therefore it is important to keep children from picking them. A good rule of thumb is to teach them to "always ask first" before touching, tasting or smelling anything.

Here are some tell tale signs that a mushroom might be poisonous:

- Warts or scales on the top of the mushroom
- The appearance of gills on the underside of the cap that are white or light-colored, not brown
- An upper ring around the upper side of the stem
- A lower ring around the lower part of the stem
- A base of the stem shaped like a bulb

In the event that you even think that your child or an adult has eaten a poisonous mushroom you should call the poison center immediately by dialing 1-800-222-1222.

For more information on poisonous plants visit our website at www.upstatepoison.org and download our brochure on poisonous plants or click on our links page to go to Cornell University Poisonous plants website.

Sources: Lincoff, Gary. The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms. New York: Knopf, 1984, Pickert, Kate. "Mushrooming Anxiety", New York Magazine May, 2005, Hodgson, Moira. The New York Times January, 1997, natl. ed, www.familydoctor.org, <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/toxicagents/amanita/amanita.html>

A Few Facts You Might Not Know...

56,000... Number of children injured EVERY day

20.6 MILLION... Number of children injured EACH year

22,000... Number of young children who **die** as a result of injury EVERY year

60,000... Number of young children who are **permanently disabled** EACH year

\$347 BILLION... Cost of common child injury to U.S. healthcare system EACH year

298,000... Number of hospitalizations of young children EACH year due to injury

8,700,000... Number of emergency room visits of young children EACH year due to injury

10,600,000... Number of visits to physician's offices of young children EACH year due to injury

90... Percentage of unintentional injuries suffered by young children in their homes

\$10-15... Average cost of a life-saving safety device

FREE to call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222

Source: The safe as possible campaign www.assafeaspossible.org

Flavored Medicine

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As the parent of two young children I can attest to the fact that it is easier to get my children to take medicine when it tastes good. As a Public Health Educator I also worry about the potential danger of over dosing just because a medicine tastes good.

The bottom line is, it is the responsibility of the adult caregivers in the home to safely administer and store medicines. Never refer to medicine as candy. Extra caution is required with medicines that require refrigeration as often these medicines are within reach of children and stored with everyday food products.

We recommend you have the number of the Poison Center available in the event you need to call for an emergency or for information. To request poison prevention information, phone stickers, magnets or educational materials call 1-800-222-1222 or visit us on the web at www.upstatepoison.org.



Unintentional Poisoning Can Happen To You..At Any Age!

To receive your FREE telephone stickers, magnets, and information brochures, dial 1-800-222-1222 ask for the Health Educator at The Upstate New York Poison Center.