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50 YEARS

Poison Prevention

Newsletter

July 2009

UPSTATE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL • 750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210



Pets and Poisonous Plants

Most are familiar with poisonous plants such as Poison Ivy, Sumac, and Oak and perhaps even snake berries, nightshade and moonflower.

What most people are not aware of is the effects these plants have on pets.

According to Dr. Sharon Gwaltney-Brant, a veterinarian and board-certified toxicologist who is vice president of the Animal Poison Control Center, based in Urbana, Ill. "A rule of thumb is that the prettier it is, the more likely it is to be toxic."

Common ornamental plants that can be toxic and even deadly, to pets are rhododendrons, azaleas, cycad palms, oleander, foxglove and lily of the valley. Most people are aware that mushrooms and toadstools can be poisonous to humans but they can also be poisonous to pets. Dogs are more likely to eat plants because they eat just about anything. Even if they get sick

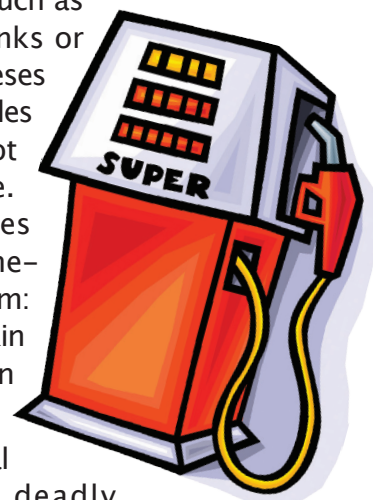
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Summer Safety

Summer is a time for fun and vacations. It is also a time to be on the watch for unintentional poisonings. Whether at home or on vacation, unintentional poisonings can and do happen, generally with everyday products. When misused these chemicals can pose a serious health hazard in the form of poisoning.

Gasoline Safety

Whether it is in the garage or a storage shed, most people do not lock up gasoline or other flammable products such as lighter fluid for the BBQ grill, propane tanks or automotive products. Often you can find these products in the same area as children's bicycles and toys. Children are curious and are not aware of the danger these products pose. Each year news stories report of tragedies involving children that suffer from gasoline-related injuries. The exposures range from: ingestion, spraying or splashing it on their skin or in their mouth and eyes, to breathing in the fumes from these dangerous products.



It only takes a moment for an unintentional exposure to happen, sometime with deadly consequences. It also only takes a moment for parents and caregivers to take the proper steps to store and lock up these products to keep children safe. If you see flammable products in the reach of children, move them to a safe location, up and away from children's toys, where possible lock these products up to prevent an accident from happening.

Pool and Spa Chemical Safety

Both the CDC and the EPA have issued warnings alerting people to the safe storage and handling of swimming pool/spa chemicals and water safety. Although these chemicals are designed to keep us safe by destroying disease causing microorganisms and maintaining a clean swimming/spa environment, mishandled chlorine and other water-treatment chemicals are the cause of thousands of injuries and emergency room visits each year.

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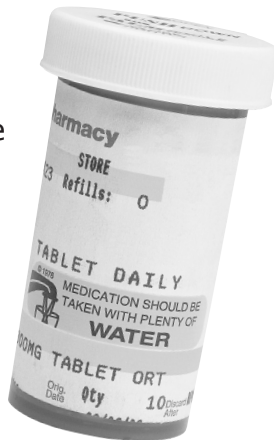
Always Read The Label

New Labeling Required for OTC Pain and Fever Medicines. In a final rule issued on April 28, 2009, the FDA directed that labeling be revised for acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). The final rule applies to all OTC pain relievers and fever reducers, including those that contain one of these ingredients in combination with other ingredients, such as in cold medicines containing pain relievers or fever reducers.

Under the final rule, manufacturers must:

- ensure that the labeling warns of the risk of stomach bleeding for NSAIDs and the risk of severe liver damage for acetaminophen
- ensure that the active ingredients of these drugs are prominently displayed on the drug labels on both packages and bottles
- revise the product labeling within one year of the date the rule was issued

For more information:
www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2009/NEW02004.html



I Dare You! I Double Dare You.

Most kids want to “fit in” with the other kids at school. Sometimes what starts out as a harmless prank could end up as a poisoning.

I was presenting a poison prevention program to a class of 7th graders. After my presentation the teacher approached me and explained that some boys in her class bet another boy that he couldn't eat six boxes of the chocolate laxative, he took the bet, luckily no severe outcome.

Another time at a health fair a mother and her son were visiting my table. I explained how easy it is for unintentional poisoning to occur, the mother shared with me her story of calling the poison center when her son drank some of the liquid in an icepack. His rationale was because his friends dared him to. Again, the outcome did not result in serious injury.

Kids will be kids, but as adults it is our job to teach them that taking a dare may result in a poisoning.

Summer Safety

Pool and spa chemicals are a potential poisoning hazard when they become wet, improperly mixed or combined with other chemicals. Pool chemicals are intended to be added to large quantities of water. However, if a small amount of water comes into contact with these chemicals an undesirable reaction may occur, such as an increase in temperature that might cause burning if contact with the skin or the release of a toxic gas.

Children and adults can be exposed to the dust of these products by breathing it in or getting it in their eyes or on their skin. The chemical dust comes in contact with the moisture in the lungs, eyes or skin and a reaction occurs resulting in a poisoning.

Learn how to avoid these dangers by following these safety suggestions.

- Always read the label for instruction on proper handling and storage
- Wear protective gloves, eyewear and clothing when handling chemicals

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- Use caution when opening and mixing these products
- Store these products out of the reach of children and pets
- Always wash your hands after handling chemical and flammable products



Always keep the number of the poison center available. For more information or to order stickers, magnets and poison prevention information, visit our website at www.upstatepoison.org.

Sources: <http://www.epa.gov/oem/docs/chem/spalert.pdf>, about.com, and <http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Water-Safety/waterinjuries-factsheet.htm>

Dissolvable Tobacco Products Look Like Candy

Tobacco in any form is dangerous to your health. If a child were to ingest one whole cigarette or three cigarette butts the Poison Control Center would recommend a trip to the emergency room. Currently tobacco companies are test marketing a new form of smokeless, spitless tobacco products that could put children at further risk.

The new products are “dissolvable tobacco”. The products are being promoted as a convenient alternative to cigarettes, for people who are otherwise restricted from smoking at work and in public environments. What is not being mentioned is how closely these products resemble candy.

The dissolvable tobacco is made from finely milled tobacco, held together with food-grade binders and enhanced with flavoring such as wintergreen, mint and java. The product comes in the shape of small rectangular and ovals, thin strips and toothpick shaped sticks, similar in appearance to candy, mints or pills.

The dissolvable tobacco can easily be mistaken for candy. It is small enough to fit in a pocket and there is no noticeable tobacco smell. It is designed to be placed in the mouth, on the tongue or between the cheek and gum where tobacco is released as it dissolves.

The dissolvable tobacco products are age-restricted and are sold in child-resistant packaging, which has a striking resemblance to the packaging of candy products. The likelihood that adults will carry

the small packages in their pocket or purse or leave them in an unsecured place, creates the opportunity for children to have access to them.

Because of the resemblance to candy, if children did ingest the “dissolvable tobacco”, there is a potential of a nicotine overdose.

The nicotine in these products can be as much as three times the amount of nicotine found in a typical cigarette. If a child were to consume small amounts of nicotine the symptoms might include: paleness, sweating, shakiness, nausea and vomiting. More serious symptoms result from larger amounts ingested: change in blood pressure, change in heart rate, confusion and even seizures or coma.

Currently the products are available in Ohio and Massachusetts not yet in New York State. However, they are available in.

If a child does ingest a dissolvable or smokeless tobacco product call the Poison Center immediately at 1-800-222-1222, even if there are no noticeable symptoms. The poison specialist will instruct you as what to do next.

Sources: CNN, www.nysmokefree.com



Pets and Poisonous Plants

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from eating a plant they are just as likely to have a repeat exposure if it tasted good.

Often people call the poison center with questions about pet poison exposures. Most Poison Centers are not equipped to address pet-related questions because the metabolism and digestive system of pets is different from humans. We recommend that if you think your pet has been exposed to a poison call your vet or the Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435. **Note:** There is a charge for this service and you will need a credit card to complete the transaction. For more information visit their website at <http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/>

A POISONING CAN HAPPEN TO YOU!

About half of the poisoning emergencies calls to the Center involve small children. However, the Center also helps teens, adults, and senior with drug interactions, suicide attempts, medication errors, substance abuse, chemical spills, and occupational exposures. Pet owners call too, when the dog, cat or bird has been poisoned. Highly trained, certified toxicology specialists provide expert treatment and guidance immediately.

There is never a charge for the service, no matter how serious the problem. However, the Poison Center is not a government agency. We rely on grants and your generous tax-deductible donations for support.

CALLING AREA FOR THE UPSTATE NEW YORK POISON CENTER



A Service of the State University of
New York Upstate Medical University at
University Hospital, Syracuse.

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.