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**50 YEARS**

# Poison Prevention

Newsletter

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## Peanut Butter - Salmonella Outbreak

CDC continues to collaborate with public health officials in many states and the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to investigate a multistate outbreak of human infections due to Salmonella serotype Typhimurium. In order to make it easier for consumers to determine whether any of the peanut butter-containing products they have at home are subject to recall, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has created and posted an expanded, searchable database that will be updated as new information becomes available:

*"<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/peanutbutterrecall/index.cfm>*

CDC requests that United States poison control centers refer public inquiries regarding Salmonella-contaminated peanut-butter products to 1-(800) CDC-INFO [1 - (800) 232-4636]



## Parents Underestimate Teens Access to Prescription Drugs

Every day, 2,500 teenagers use a prescription drug to get high for the first time, according to The Partnership for a Drug-Free America. This non-profit organization dedicated to helping families raise healthy children notes at their website that "teens are accessing these drugs in the comfort of home as easily as opening a cupboard, drawer, or medicine cabinet".

Most parents can't understand what motivates teens to start abusing prescription drugs. Many don't believe that their child would ever abuse prescription drugs.

Looking at the facts, doctors are prescribing more drugs for more identified health problems than ever before.

Prescription medications are generally more potent than those sold over-the-counter (OTC) and may have more serious side effects if inappropriately used. Therefore, these medications are only sold under a doctor's direction. If your teen is taking medicine prescribed for someone else, he or she is at risk for poisoning or worse.

Unfortunately teens are easily influenced by peer pressure and are often are encouraged to "experiment" with things they know very little about.

### What can you do to prevent prescription drug abuse?

Awareness that prescription drug abuse is a potential danger for your teen is the first step towards prevention.

- **Step 1** - Educate yourself on the dangers and facts of prescription drug abuse.
- **Step 2** - Talk to your kids and let them know you are aware of this problem and the challenges they face with peer pressure and fitting in.
- **Step 3** - Monitor the prescription and over the counter drugs in your home. Keep a list of the medications, their active ingredient(s) and the quantity. Make it a habit to periodically do an inventory to make sure the medication is not missing.
- **Step 4** - Secure medications. Lock them up if necessary.

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# Safe Medicine Use

According to the 2007 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers, ninety percent of exposure calls to Poison Centers happened in the home and medicine exposures continue to be one of the leading causes of unintentional poisoning calls.

Whether it is a prescription medicine, an over-the-counter product OTC -, or an herbal or dietary supplement, it is critical to practice safe medicine use to avoid a potential poisoning.

There are several things you can do to practice safe medicine use.

## At Home

- Maintain a list of prescription drugs, non-prescription drugs and other products such as vitamins, and minerals, in the home
- Keep medicines out of the reach of children. If possible store medications in a locked cabinet, drawer, or container with a lock on it
- Never take a prescription medicine with an OTC or herbal and dietary supplement without the consent of your doctor or pharmacist
- Always read the label before you use a medicine to make sure it is the right medicine, for the right person, in the right amount, at the right time and in the right way
- Check the active ingredients in all of your medicines to avoid an overdose
- When starting a new medication ask your doctor or pharmacist to review all of your medications to be sure it is safe
- Never take more than what is prescribed. If your medicine is in liquid form make sure you have the proper dispenser. Using your home utensils may not give you the proper amount
- Never share your prescription medicine or take someone else's. Medicines are prescribed under medical supervision specifically for the person it is being prescribed to
- Be aware that medicines look like candy. Always store your medicines in their original container

For more information or to download the pamphlet "Medicine in My Home" visit, [www.fda.gov/medsinmyhome](http://www.fda.gov/medsinmyhome)

## Parents Underestimate Teens

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- **Step 5** – Dispose of medications that are out dated, un-used and no longer prescribed. Contact your local pharmacy, recycling coordinator, or municipality for proper disposal.

For more information and action steps visit [www.notinmyhouse.com](http://www.notinmyhouse.com) -- for useful information and tips, on the dangers of prescription drug misuse and abuse.

The studies reveal that most parents are not aware of teen prescription drug abuse. Teens claim that their parents are not discussing this problem with them or the dangers associated with it.

Prescription drugs are prescribed with medical supervision. After a thorough examine from a doctor, the right medication and dose is prescribed for a specific medical condition. The doctor explains what the medicine is and the potentially dangerous side effects. It is important to know exactly how and when to take the medicine, including the things to avoid while taking the drug — such as drinking alcohol, smoking, or taking other medications. People that abuse prescription medications, are not aware of these dangers and the potentially serious medical consequences.

The government has devoted resources to address this growing problem. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) launched its first major Federal effort to educate parents about teen prescription drug abuse. Millions of television viewers watched the advertising kickoff of this national public awareness campaign during the Super Bowl on January 24, 2008. Since then additional efforts focused on community resources, print and on-line resources to create awareness of this problem.



Source: National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University

# Always Read the Label

Most medications can cause side effects. But, by following the directions on the label the potential for side effects can be reduced or eliminated. The label provides important information in an easy to read format, helping you to choose the medicines that treat your symptoms.

When reading the label be sure to look for:

## The New Drug Facts Label

### Drug Facts

#### Active ingredient (in each tablet)

Chlorpheniramine maleate 2 mg ..... Antihistamine

#### Purpose

**Uses** temporarily relieves these symptoms due to hay fever or other upper respiratory allergies:  
■ sneezing ■ runny nose ■ itchy, watery eyes ■ itchy throat

#### Warnings

Ask a doctor before use if you have

- glaucoma
- a breathing problem such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis
- trouble urinating due to an enlarged prostate gland

Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use if you are taking tranquilizers or sedatives

#### When using this product

- you may get drowsy
- avoid alcoholic drinks
- alcohol, sedatives, and tranquilizers may increase drowsiness
- be careful when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery
- excitability may occur, especially in children

If pregnant or breast-feeding, ask a health professional before use.

Keep out of reach of children. In case of overdose, get medical help or contact a Poison Control Center right away.

#### Directions

adults and children 12 years and over

take 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours;  
not more than 12 tablets in 24 hours

children 6 years to under 12 years

take 1 tablet every 4 to 6 hours;  
not more than 6 tablets in 24 hours

children under 6 years

ask a doctor

**Other information** store at 20-25° C (68-77° F) ■ protect from excessive moisture

**Inactive ingredients** D&C yellow no. 10, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, pregelatinized starch

#### Active Ingredient

An active ingredient is the chemical compound in the medicine that works with your body to bring relief to your symptoms. It can always be found as the first item on the label.

#### Uses

Sometimes also referred to as indications, this section tells you the ONLY symptoms the medicine is approved treat.

#### Warnings

This section will tell you what other medications, foods or situations to avoid (such as driving) when taking this medicine.

#### Inactive Ingredients

An inactive ingredient is a chemical compound in the medicine that has no effect on your body. Preservatives, items that bind the pill together and food colors are listed here.

#### Other Information

Any other important information about the product, such as how to store the medicine, will be listed in this section.

#### Directions

The only recommended daily dosage and frequency of dosage will be listed here. You should follow this strictly. It's not just how much you take, but also how often.

# 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.