



[www.upstatepoison.org](http://www.upstatepoison.org)

**50 YEARS**

# Poison Prevention

Newsletter

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

## Back to School Drug Safety

The world today is a different place from the one most of our parents and grandparents grew up in. For them, exposure to drugs and alcohol didn't generally occur until high school or college. Today it is likely that children will experience an encounter as early as elementary school.

Misuse of over-the-counter medications and prescription drugs has increased in recent years. Kids have instant access to an array of medications by simply opening the family medicine cabinet. Additionally, as children get older they often are exposed to medication exposures because of peer pressure.

Even if you keep a watchful eye on the medications in your home, teach your children to never take medication from someone other than you or without your permission. Taking medication that is not prescribed specifically for you might have a deadly outcome.

To help parents and teachers looking for the latest research findings on drug abuse and addiction, the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has a special website entitled, "NIDA Goes Back to School" found at

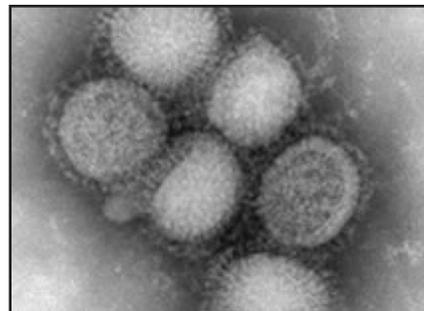
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## Back to School Flu Safety

Summer is over and it's time for the kids to go back to school. Along with new teachers and friends children can also be introduced to colds and flu. Most people remember the "swine flu" that dominated the news earlier this year. The latest is the swine flu, a new virus formally identified as H1N1 that has caused illness around the world.

### What is novel H1N1 (swine flu)?

According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control) this new virus was first detected in the United States in mid-April 2009. Other countries, including Mexico and Canada, have reported people sick with this new virus. This virus spreads from person-to-person in much the same way that other seasonal influenza viruses spread. The novel H1N1 is a new influenza virus, which has been identified as a genetic mix of human, bird and swine viruses. From April 15, 2009 to July 24, 2009, states reported a total of 43,771 confirmed and probable cases of novel influenza A (H1N1) infection. Of these cases reported, 5,011 people were hospitalized and 302 people died.



This virus was originally referred to as "swine flu" because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. But further study has shown that this new virus is very different from what normally circulates in North American pigs. It has two genes from flu viruses that normally circulate in pigs in Europe and Asia and avian genes and human genes.

### What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to those of regular human flu. They include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and extreme fatigue. Some people may experience diarrhea and vomiting. Although most people recover on their own, pregnant women and people with diabetes and other diseases have been vulnerable to more serious effects.

### How to protect yourself from the flu

There is currently no vaccine available to prevent infection with swine flu. The best way to prevent any type of flu virus infection is to wash your hands often with soap and water for 15 to 20 seconds, especially after

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# Poison Prevention Education Begins At Home

Poison Center statistics show that nearly sixty-two percent of poison calls to the Poison Center involve children under the age of six. Most poisonings are preventable. With a little help and effort parents, caregivers and children can work together to avoid an unintentional poisoning from happening.

Encourage your children to get involved in keeping the whole family safe from unintentional exposures, because a Poisoning Can Happen To You at Any Age!

## Follow these prevention tips:

- Search each room in your home – especially the garage and basement – for poisons within the reach of children. This includes medications, personal care items, cleaning products, automotive fluids and pesticides.
- Keep the number for the Poison Center on or near the phone in case of an emergency.
- Add the Poison Center's phone number, 1-800-222-1222, to your cell phone address book. Even if you're out of town, this number will route your call to the nearest poison control center.
- Keep all medications both prescription and over-the-counter out of the reach of children. Request medication bottles with child-resistant closures when available. Remember that these items are not child-proof.



- Avoid leaving empty, full or partially full alcoholic beverages within a child's reach.
- Teach children not to put leaves, stems, bark, seeds, nuts or berries from any plant into their mouths and check whether your plants are a danger or not.
- Store medications and other dangerous products in a secure location. Do not keep these items near food or beverages. It is best to keep all of these items up and out of the reach of children.
- Install several carbon monoxide detector/alarm in your home – it's the only way to identify this colorless, odorless and invisible poison.
- Return household products to a child-proof cabinet as soon as you're done using them.
- Treat every substance as potentially poisonous – anything can be toxic in certain amounts.

In the event you have to call the Poison Center you should provide as much of the following information as possible: victim's age and weight; name and type of poison, if known; time of poison exposure; and any symptoms.

For more poison prevention information visit our website at [www.upstatepoison.org](http://www.upstatepoison.org). For brochures, stickers or magnets call 315-464-5375.

## Back to School Flu Safety

you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based sanitizers are also effective. If using alcohol gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry.

Try to avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, because that is how germs are spread. Avoid close contact with people who have flu symptoms. If you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash after you have used it.

### What should I do if I get flu symptoms?

If you are sick, stay home and minimize contact with others. Call your doctor's office before coming in so they can prepare for your visit. Your doctor may test you for influenza and/or may provide treatment.

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Medications called anti-viral can be used to treat swine flu.

If you live in an area where swine flu cases have been identified or you have recently visited such an area, you should contact your health care provider if you develop symptoms of the flu. Let your doctor know that you were recently in such an area.

### For more information visit these websites:

- [http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general\\_info.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general_info.htm)
- <http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/>

Source

[http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general\\_info.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general_info.htm)

# Questions on Lead Poisoning

During our poison prevention education programs participants often ask questions about lead poison. Lead exposures are difficult to assess without a thorough blood test. Lead poisoning, unlike most other poison exposures, can happen over a period of time and there may be no obvious signs of exposure.

Children and pregnant women are especially at risk of lead poisoning. The most common causes of lead poisoning are lead-based paint and lead contaminated dust in older homes. Although, lead-based paints have been banned since the 1978, it is the deterioration of this paint that causes a problem. According to the CDC approximately 24 million housing units have deteriorated leaded paint and elevated levels of lead-contaminated house dust. More than 4 million of these dwellings are homes to one or more young children.

## What can you do to prevent lead exposure?

If you think there is a chance your home or apartment is contaminated with lead call the County Health Department and speak to someone in the Lead Poisoning Program or department that handles lead exposures. They can provide services or information on lead screening and follow-up tests for lead poisoning. The Health Department monitors the records of all lead testing conducted in their county to ensure appropriate medical follow-up. Referrals for environmental and nursing visits are provided when indicated.

The Health Department provides community education programs and literature. They can assist with scheduling blood lead testing.

## Are there other sources of lead poisoning?

In today's global economy there are hundreds of products imported from other countries such as toys, furniture, cosmetics and jewelry that have been identified as containing high levels of lead. To learn more about product recalls, visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website at <http://www.cpsc.gov/>. For information on lead in cosmetics go to <http://safecosmetics.org/>.

Sources: <http://cdc.gov>, <http://www.ongov.net/Health/leadcontrol.html>, Lead Can Poison People, Onondaga County Health Department.

## Lead Recalls

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products. CPSC announces all recalls on their website <http://www.cpsc.gov/>.

Click on the links in the menu to the left to see lists of recalled items by product categories. The most recent recalls are listed at the top of each page. Pictures and descriptions are taken directly from the CPSC website. Click on the picture or link to see full descriptions of the recalled items. Many recalls include more than one type of item and have additional pictures available on the CPSC website.

## 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.

## Back to School Drug Safety

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<http://backtoschool.drugabuse.gov>. It contains free information about the latest science-based drug abuse publications and teaching materials. You can also find easy to order teaching aids and specialized curricula for purchase that addresses the challenging issues facing kids and young adults today. The information is also available in Spanish!

Students who want or need to know the science behind drug abuse can visit a site designed for teens at [www.teens.drugabuse.gov](http://www.teens.drugabuse.gov).

# Poison Trivia Quiz

1. What drug overdose did actress and film star Judy Garland die from?
  - a. Cocaine
  - b. Alcohol
  - c. Opium
  - d. Barbiturates
2. On the popular show Seinfeld, George's fiancée is poisoned and dies. How did this tragedy happen?
  - a. Wearing toxic lipstick
  - b. From licking engagement envelopes made with a toxic glue
  - c. Eating bad mayonnaise at the cabin in the woods
  - d. Inhaling fumes from George's dirty laundry
3. In an episode of the Simpsons, Bart takes a trip to France on an exchange program, where he is enslaved by a couple of nasty vineyard owners, and is forced to drink adulterated wine. What was the toxic adulterant in the wine?
  - a. Antifreeze
  - b. Beer
  - c. Limburger cheese
  - d. Rubbing alcohol
4. In Lewis Carole's Alice in Wonderland, a character is known as the "Mad Hatter". What substance caused this condition in real-life manufacturers of hats in the late 19th century?
  - a. Lye soap used for cleaning
  - b. Mercury, used to cure the felt
  - c. Lead, used in the shaping process
  - d. Dye from poison berries
5. In the book "Curious George Gets a Job", George is sent to a hospital. While there his curiosity gets the better of him, when he opens a bottle, inhales the contents, and is rendered unconscious. What did the bottle that knocked him out contain?
  - a. Nitrous oxide
  - b. Ammonia nitrate
  - c. Bleach
  - d. Ether



Answers: 1. d, 2. b, 3. c, 4. b, 5. d