

# Poison-proof your world

By Craig W. Armstrong

Poison prevention is something most of us don't think about unless we have a small child at home. But just as we need to keep the little ones safe, there are also poisoning dangers for us "big kids."

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, approximately 2.4 million people swallow or come into contact with a poisonous substance each year, and more than half are under the age of six. Remember the old days when a bottle of aspirin was easy to open? Thankfully, those days are gone, but vigilance is still very important.

To prevent poisoning, keep all medication locked up out of reach of small children and away from the storage areas for food. Keep medication in its original container, which should have a child-proof lid. If you carry medication in your purse or briefcase, safeguard those as well. The key is to make sure that children can't get to them, and if they do, that they can't get them open.

Next, be aware of your behavior. Don't let children see you take medication. Most children want to be just like Mommy or Daddy, and they might think that taking medication will make them grown up. Never refer to medicine as "candy," especially since some medicine for children is made to taste good.

Medication is not the only thing that can poison children, adults or even pets. Your household is probably full of things that are considered poisonous. Common sense and vigilance are important.

Like medication, hazardous household products should be locked up out of reach of children and pets. When working with these products, make sure you read the labels, and use and clean them up properly, along with any rags or other cleaning tools that may contain the substances. Be aware of the fumes these products may emit and make sure you have proper ventilation. Finally, don't mix products! This could create dangerous fumes or possibly an explosion.

If a poisoning does occur, immediate action is needed. If you find a child or adult unconscious, having a seizure or convulsions, or not breathing due to contact or swallowing a poisonous substance, call 911 immediately. If a child has swallowed something, but does not have any symptoms, make them spit out anything in their mouth and call your poison control center. The representative at the center will be able to instruct you further. It is a good idea to have this number posted by your telephone or programmed into your cell phone.

Keeping you and your family safe from poison is a matter of common sense and being prepared. Safeguard your home by determining what substances may cause a problem and follow these simple steps. For a poison emergency call **1-800-222-1222**. □



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the individual mind  
and join  
the ocean of  
consciousness.  
~ Sri Dharma  
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