

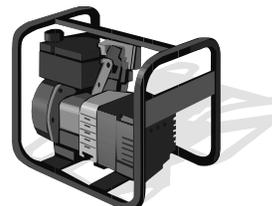


Seasonal Hazards - Cold Weather

Much of the winter is spent indoors. This includes spiders and other critters looking for hiding spots in your home, garages, sheds, barns and play houses. Children hide and seek under sinks and counters. Poisons intended for rodents could be at easy reach for children too. Antifreeze, coolants and windshield washer fluid are highly toxic for human and for pets.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) - The Silent Killer:

Homeowners should have their complete heating systems checked before every heating season. Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. Heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel are potential sources of carbon monoxide. Vehicles, grills or generators running in an attached garage can also produce dangerous levels of CO, even if the garage door is open. Symptoms: severe headaches; becoming dizzy, confused, nauseated, the person could faint or even die. Low levels can cause sleepiness, shortness of breath, mild nausea, and mild headaches and may have long-term effects on your health. Since many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses, you may not think that carbon monoxide poisoning could be the cause. Often, several members of the same family or those in the same building will complain of similar symptoms. ***Every home should have at least one working carbon monoxide detector (can be purchased at local hardware store or supermarkets).***



If you think someone is poisoned:

- Call the national poison emergency hotline **1-800-222-1222** to check with Poison Center experts about what to do. Specially trained pharmacists and nurses are ready to provide confidential advice 24 hrs, every day. This service is free to the general public.
- Bring the person and the poison to the phone if possible.
- **Do NOT** make the poisoned person throw up!
Some poisons can cause more damage when they come back up.
Note: Syrup of Ipecac is no longer recommended.



Medicine Cabinet: Winter is a good time to clean out the medicine cabinet. Check the expiration dates on all medicines and get rid of expired medicines (including antibiotics after treatment is completed).

Medication disposal: Take leftover medications out of their original container, put them in a small plastic bag, add a little water, some coffee ground or kitty litter, seal it and throw it in the trash.

POISON WATCH

Cough and Cold: Winter's bluster, rain, cold and snow can mean coughs, flu, and visits to the pharmacist for prescriptions. Be aware of medicines and their hazards to children. Almost 50% of children's exposures to poisoning involve medications. Keeping medicines out of sight and out of everyone's reach is the single most effective step one can take to ***Be Poison Wise!***



The best prevention is to wash everyone's hands often with soap and water.

As an alternative, hand sanitizers could be used. Caution: make sure this substance is air dried completely! Hand sanitizers contain a lot of alcohol which is harmful to children when ingested when they put their hands in their mouth. Adults could burn themselves by lighting a candle, cigarette or starting a fire right after using the product and not letting it dry first.

During cold and flu season, remedies are often found on counters or bed stands, tempting to youngsters. These medicines, as well as acetaminophen (Tylenol ®) and aspirin, can be toxic to children. Cold medicines and prescription pain medications are appealing to others as well. This is an alarming epidemic involving older kids. They are looking for any substance that can be used and abused to make them feel "high". ***Keep medications locked up or well out of the reach of children.***



Prevent taking too much medicine by ***reading the labels every time before taking medicine and follow directions carefully!*** Many medications contain identical ingredients, so be careful when taking different medications and do not take more than directed! When taking other kinds of medications, especially for high blood pressure or depression, you should always check with your physician or pharmacist before using any cold remedy. There are potential interactions that can be life threatening.

Poison Proofing: A window ledge or counter top are not safe places for vitamins or food supplements. Iron tablets are an example of a vitamin that can look like candy to a young child, yet can be very poisonous. ***The safest place for medicines is in a locked cabinet or box.*** If you must have containers without child-resistant closures, remember to lock them away from children's reach.

Medication Safety Tips:

- ☒ Do NOT call medicines "candy"
- ☒ Do NOT take medicine in front of children
- ☒ Do NOT share prescription medications



- ✓ Store medicines safely
- ✓ Know what you are taking and why
- ✓ Always read the labels before taking medicine
- ✓ *(turn on the light, put on your glasses)*
- ✓ Keep a medication record
- ✓ Ask questions and call for help when unsure
(your doctor, pharmacist or the poison center)