



**Maryland Poison Center**  
 University of Maryland School of Pharmacy  
**1-800-222-1222**

# Poison

# Prevention Press

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## Household Product Storage Tips

To decrease the likelihood of a poisoning, follow the following storage tips:

- Store products in their original containers, never in food containers
- Use child-resistant packaging on medicines and household products
- Store household cleaners and other household products in locked cabinets
- Store household products away from food
- Return the household products and medicines to their proper storage place immediately after use
- Never store household products or medicines in unlabeled containers

## Proper Storage Prevents Poisonings

Have you ever transferred a cleaning or other household product from its original, large container into a soda or water bottle when the larger bottle was almost empty? Have you ever mixed up plant food or other chemicals in a discarded juice container? If you have answered "yes" or know someone who has done this, please read on for some dramatic examples of why this practice should be avoided.

The Maryland Poison Center has received numerous calls involving the scenarios mentioned above. In one instance, a child mistook a degreaser for soda when it was brought home from the parent's work, and took a large gulp. The results were devastating as the child was burned internally. A similar situation occurred in an adult that brought a floor stripper home in a water bottle. The bottle was mistakenly placed in the refrigerator where another family member grabbed it and gulped it down after working in the yard. Again, the results were tragic as the individual was also burned internally. Antifreeze stored in a juice bottle has been mistaken for juice by small children resulting in costly medical treatment to prevent the kidney damage that can occur when antifreeze is ingested. Finally, there have been reports in the news where tiki torch oil has been mistaken for juice and swallowed. The individuals gagged while swallowing, resulting in the torch oil entering the lungs and causing lung damage.

All of the above are true stories where the tragedy could have been avoided if the products were stored properly. The Maryland Poison Center recommends avoiding the use of food containers to store or mix up household cleaners, products and chemicals. If you must use a food container, remove the original label and re-label the container with the exact contents of the bottle. Although this practice would not prevent a young child from mistaking the product for juice or soda, it will assist the poison specialists when a call is made for assistance with the unintentional ingestion. Household products should be stored out of the sight of small children, preferably in a locked cabinet. Always remember to call the poison experts at the Maryland Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 as soon as you suspect a poisoning may have occurred.

## Did you know that...

- The Maryland Poison Center managed 2,935 exposures to household cleaning products in 2007?
- Household cleaning products were the 2nd most common exposure in children under the age of 6 years old in 2007?

## Use the Internet and Old Home Remedies with Caution

It's a wonder we are still alive after using some of the old home remedies passed down from our mothers and grandmothers. We have learned a lot from our past, and some things that our parents did when they were young have been discovered to be unhealthy. We should scrutinize old home remedies before using them. The same applies to internet remedies. One such remedy that has prompted calls to the Maryland Poison Center recently is soaking feet in household bleach to eliminate foot fungus. Unfortunately, there are no scientific studies to show this works and in fact, this could cause unnecessary harm. Household bleach is unlikely to cause burns on intact, healthy skin when used for short periods of time; however, soaking irritated or broken skin in household bleach, may cause burns. Before using an internet remedy or an old home remedy, check with your physician or the poison center to make sure you will not make your situation worse!



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