

Poison Prevention Press

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The Dose Makes the Poison

According to Paracelsus, the “father of toxicology”, it is the dose makes the poison. Anything, even water, can be a poison if taken in the wrong amount. Luckily, you don’t have to guess what the “wrong amount” really is. If you have even the slightest concern that someone took too much of something, used it in wrong way, or a medicine was taken by the wrong person, you should call the poison center to make sure everything is okay. Free advice is available from expert pharmacists and nurses anytime day or night. Call 800-222-1222 to get the right answer right away.

Remember

Text POISON to 797979
to add Poison Control as a contact in your mobile phone.

Did you know that...

- The staff at the MPC has over 250 combined years of experience managing poisonings and overdoses?
- More than 60% of MPC callers are given advice that keeps them at home?

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Poison Myths...Learn the Truth

The Maryland Poison Center (MPC) answers over 44,000 calls every year. Callers are often shocked to find substances they think are deadly poisons are actually not a problem. Others find things they thought were safe could be dangerous. Some callers rely on home remedies or information passed down from their family when trying to treat a suspected poisoning. Others go to the internet. While some of the information provided by family members and the internet might be correct, there is also wrong or outdated information, along with some poison myths. Let’s learn the truth about poisonings.

Myth	Truth
Drinking a lot of water will eliminate a substance from body faster.	Drinking extra water will not remove the poison from the body faster. In fact, drinking too much water can itself be dangerous.
Herbal and natural remedies and organic personal care products are completely safe and non-toxic.	These products do not have to meet the same safety standards as medicines. Some products are found to contain substances not listed on the label. Natural products can interact with medicine so talk to your doctor before using them.
Symptoms from poisons occur immediately.	Symptoms from a poisoning or overdose can be immediate. But they can also be delayed by minutes or hours. The correct action is to call the poison center as soon as a poisoning is suspected.
Children will not eat things that taste bad.	Young children do not have a fully developed sense of taste. What tastes bad to you may not taste bad to a child. In general, children are curious enough to taste anything.
Children cannot open child-proof containers.	The containers are actually not child-proof... they are child-resistant. They make products more difficult to open but not impossible. If given enough time, many children can open a child-resistant cap.
Children can become drunk by licking hand sanitizer.	Licking a single squirt or a pea-sized amount of hand sanitizer from their hands is not dangerous. Consuming larger quantities from the bottle can be dangerous.
Vomiting or giving milk is the universal antidote.	The universal antidote for poisoning is calling the experts at the poison center. Milk is given to treat some poisons but not all. It might also be dangerous to vomit after swallowing some substances.
Poinsettias are poisonous.	The plant is not deadly to people or pets. If eaten in large amounts, poinsettias will only cause stomach upset. Pets may develop symptoms after eating smaller amounts.