



Maryland Poison Center  
University of Maryland School of Pharmacy

1-800-222-1222

# Poison

# Prevention Press

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## First Aid for Poisoning

### •Poison on the skin

Remove all contaminated clothing and flood the skin with water for 10 minutes. Then, wash the affected area gently with soap and water and rinse thoroughly. Do not try to neutralize the poison by using any other substances.

### •Poison in the eye

Flood the eye with lukewarm (not hot) water poured from a large glass 2 to 3 inches from the eye. Repeat for 15 minutes. Have the patient blink as much as possible while flooding the eye. Do not force the eyelid open.

### •Poison by inhalation

Immediately get the person to fresh air. Avoid breathing fumes. Open all doors and windows wide. If victim is not breathing, then start artificial respiration.

### •Poison by swallowing

Remove as much from the mouth as possible. Give a small amount of milk or water to drink if a cleaning product or chemical was swallowed. Do not attempt to induce vomiting.

## Did you know that...

•Pharmacists and nurses with special training answer the phones at the poison center

•For every \$1 spent on poison center services, at least \$7 is saved in health care costs

## Poison Myths...Learn the Truth

Each year, the Maryland Poison Center manages over 65,000 calls from Marylanders. These calls are about household products, medicines, chemicals, food and poisons in the environment (including plants, insects and snakes). Many callers are shocked to find out that things they think are deadly poisons are really not a problem. Others discover that things they thought were safe could actually be dangerous. In addition, a number of myths regarding poisons have surfaced over the years. What are some of these myths?

**Myth 1:** Symptoms from poisons occur immediately.

**Truth 1:** 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 or overdose is suspected.

**Myth 2:** Children will not eat something that tastes bad.

**Truth 2:** Children may not have a fully developed sense of taste. What tastes bad to an adult may not taste bad to a child. In general, children are curious enough to taste anything.

**Myth 3:** Children cannot open child-proof containers.

**Truth 3:** The containers are actually not child-proof...they are child-resistant. These containers are meant to slow children from opening the product, but if given enough time, many children will open the child-resistant cap.

**Myth 4:** Children can become drunk from licking hand sanitizer from their hands.

**Truth 4:** Licking a single squirt or a pea-sized amount of hand sanitizer from their hands is not dangerous. However, consuming larger quantities from the bottle can be dangerous. Always use the product as directed.

**Myth 5:** Sunscreen in the eyes will cause blindness.

**Truth 5:** Sunscreen in the eyes is very irritating, but it will not cause blindness. Even though the products are usually waterproof, flushing the eyes with water for 15 minutes will remove the product and minimize damage to the eye.

**Myth 6:** Herbal and natural remedies are completely safe and non-toxic.

**Truth 6:** Herbal and natural products do not have to meet the same safety standards as medicines. Some products have even been found to contain substances not listed on the label. Natural products can interact with medicines, so it is important to tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are using a natural product, and only use well-known brands.

**Myth 7:** Poinsettias are poisonous.

**Truth 7:** Poinsettias will cause mild stomach upset only if a very large amount of the leaves are eaten. Pets may be a little more sensitive, but the plant is not deadly to people or pets.

The best source for information about poisons is the poison center...a quick call to 1-800-222-1222 will get the answers to all of your poison questions.