

Poison Prevention Press

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Safe Use of Insect Repellents

Many insect repellents contain DEET. Use the following guidelines when using these products:

- Read and follow all directions and cautions on the product label.
- To apply to face, first spray product onto hands, then rub onto face.
- Use only when outdoors and wash skin with soap and water after coming indoors.
- Do not apply to young children's hands or around eyes and mouth.
- Use just enough to cover exposed skin...avoid applying too much!
- Call the poison center right away if swallowed.

If you want a less toxic alternative to DEET, choose a product that contains picaridin.

Did you know that...

- In 2013, the MPC managed 86 calls about insect repellents and 131 calls about sunscreen?
- In 2013, the MPC managed 428 calls involving a bite or a sting?



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Summertime Poison Hazards

Summer is here so we spend more time outdoors. Children are not in school and have more opportunity to find things in and around their house that could be harmful. Summer is also a time for travelling, which takes us out of our normal routine and away from our poison-safe homes. Because poisonings do not take a summer vacation, it is important that we are aware of summer poison hazards.

Plants, berries and mushrooms growing in the woods and in our yards may look like foods we eat. Teach children not to eat berries and mushrooms they find growing outside. Remember that most mushrooms that are safe to eat have a look-a-like mushroom that is poisonous. Leave the mushroom hunting to the experts and buy mushrooms from the store. Know the names of the plants around your home. Refer to the poisonous plants list on our website to make sure you don't have poison hazards where your children are playing.

Summer is a time for bites and stings. Fortunately bites and stings from critters found in Maryland are unlikely to result in death. Most insect and spider bites will cause minor effects like itching, burning and raised areas on the skin. Maryland is the home of only one poisonous spider—the Black Widow. There are only two snakes in Maryland that are venomous. The copperhead is found in most areas of Maryland. The timber rattlesnake is mainly in the more western parts of the state. If bitten by a snake or a spider, wash the bite with soap and water and call the poison center for additional information. Not all bites will need to be treated in the hospital.

Sunscreen and insect repellents are an important part of summer. While there are combination products available, it is better to use separate products. In general, sunscreen is applied more often than insect repellent. It is important to read insect repellent labels carefully and follow the directions exactly. Side effects can occur if too much insect repellent is used or if it is applied too often. Remember to avoid applying both products too close to the eyes. Do not apply to young children's hands. Adults should wash their hands after applying both sunscreen and insect repellents.

Tiki torch fuel, lighter fluid, gasoline and lamp oil are used often in the summer. All of these products contain hydrocarbons. If swallowed, they can be irritating to the throat and stomach. The biggest danger is getting these products in the lungs. Store hydrocarbon containing products in their original containers and never use food containers or drinking cups to transfer them. If a hydrocarbon is swallowed, call the poison center right away for assistance.

Swimming pool chemicals should be stored in their original containers in a place where children cannot get ahold of them. Remember to open these chemicals in a well-ventilated area, preferably outside. Chlorine fumes can be very irritating to the lungs. Other pool chemicals can cause skin and eye irritation or burns.

Glow sticks and glow jewelry are popular at evening summertime parties. The liquid inside these products has a bad smell and taste, but is not harmful. The liquid can be very irritating to the eyes. If a glow stick breaks and the liquid squirts into the eye, begin rinsing the eye with water right away and call the poison center for further instructions.

When you arrive at your vacation destination, take a few minutes to make it poison-safe. Just like at home, medicines, cleaners, and personal care products must be stored out of sight and reach of young children. Check cabinets and drawers to make sure there is nothing left from a previous guest. And remember, help from the poison center is only a phone call away. Everywhere in the U.S., you will reach a poison center by dialing 1-800-222-1222.

