

PoisonPreventionPress

September/October 2016

Volume 9, Issue 5



Proper Storage

Proper storage of medicines and household products is a key to preventing poisonings and overdoses in young children. According to Safe Kids Worldwide, most children found medicine in places within their sight and reach:

- Pillbox (23%)
- On the floor (23%)
- Purse or diaper bag (19%)
- On the counter (18%)
- Reachable cabinet or refrigerator (8%)

Learn more about safe storage here:

www.upandaway.org

Did you know that...

- In 2015, the Maryland Poison Center received over 700 calls from grandparents?
- In 2015, the Maryland Poison Center received over 500 calls about ibuprofen and over 300 calls about acetaminophen in children under 6 years old?



Follow the MPC
on Facebook!

Keeping Your Toddler Out of Grandma's Medicines

Exposures to prescription medicine in young children are on the rise. A recent study looking at poison center data found over 500,000 children are accidentally exposed to medicines each year. More than 59,000 of these children needed emergency room care. Children under the age of five years are most at risk for accidental poisonings. In 2013, 75% of poison center calls about accidental medicine exposure were about this age group. Young children are curious. They are able to walk, climb, and explore their environment. They can open cabinets and drawers. But these are the activities that can lead to finding medicines.

According to the U.S. Census, 7.8 million children live with at least one grandparent. Forty-eight percent of emergency room visits were for young children getting into a medicine that belonged to a grandparent. Since more children live with relatives other than parents, all adults need to be aware of medicine risks. Safe Kids Worldwide looked at data from poison centers and found that children under age four most often got into diaper creams, ibuprofen, and multi-vitamins. However, amphetamines, clonidine, and benzodiazepines were the most common drugs to cause a major problem in children under the age of 5 years old. Opioid pain medicines were the most dangerous for children. They caused 20 deaths between 2001 and 2008.

It is important to practice poison and medicine safety every day. Follow these tips to help keep children of all ages safe.

- Store all medicines up and away and out of sight. Child-safe caps are not "child proof."
- Remember daily pill reminders are not child resistant. Store these out of sight and reach of young children.
- Keep opioids and other prescriptions in a locked container.
- Make sure all medicines are labeled and kept in their original container.
- Remind visitors to secure their medicines. For example, have them hang their purse out of a child's sight and reach.
- If you drop a tablet, make sure to pick it up right away.
- Dispose of unused or expired medicines on a regular basis.
- Program the Poison Center number, 1-800-222-1222, in your phone. If a child has collapsed or is not breathing call 911. Otherwise call your Poison Center first. Many accidental exposures can be managed at home. Specially trained pharmacists and nurses are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help you.

Amanda Schumaker, RN

Bond, G., Woodward, R. & Ho, M. (2011). *The growing impact of pediatric pharmaceutical poisoning. The Journal of Pediatrics*, 160 (2).

Safe Kids Worldwide. *The Rise of Medicine in the Home: Implications for Today's Children* (March 2016)