

Hold On To Dear Life

March 2019

National Poison Prevention Week March 17th - 23rd 2019

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Poisonings are preventable, yet poisoning is still the number one cause of unintentional injury death in the United States. The Utah Poison Control Center (UPCC) receives over 40,000 calls each year, and approximately 60% of cases involve children under six years of age. To raise awareness about the poison problem and prevent unintentional poison exposure, National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) is held the 3rd week of March each year.

The Poison Problem

To understand more fully the poison problem in Utah, it's important to know what types of calls are the most common. The top 5 poison exposure categories in children under six years of age are:

1. Cosmetics and personal care products
2. Household cleaning substances
3. Pain medication
4. Vitamins and minerals
5. Foreign bodies such as button batteries, magnets, and coins.



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Prevent Poisonings

There are steps parents/caregivers can take to prevent poisonings. Follow these tips to keep children safe:

- Keep potentially harmful products such as medicines, cleaners, cosmetics and personal care items up and away from children.
- When a product is out for use, take special care to watch children. If distracted by a phone call or other event, either hold on to the child or the product until you can bring your full attention back to the task.
- Never call medicine candy.
- Be aware of multiple ingredients in medicine to avoid double dosing.
- Read labels and instructions before using any medication or product.
- Dispose of unused or expired medication properly. Visit useonlyasdirected.org to find a drop box in your area.
- Never store potential poisons in containers used for eating and drinking. Store in original containers.
- Use child-resistant closures. While not child-proof, using these can provide a few more seconds to stop a poisoning.
- Save the poison control number in your phone so it is always readily available: **1-800-222-1222**.



Emergency Action

If a poison exposure does occur, knowing what to do will help ensure the best possible outcome. The UPCC is available 24/7 by calling **1-800-222-1222**. Specialists answering the phones are pharmacists and nurses with expertise in managing poison exposures and can give treatment advice over the phone. They make recommendations based on the exposure type, the patient's age, medical history and other important factors. UPCC specialists safely and effectively manage approximately 75% of poisoning exposures without sending the patient to a health care facility, thus saving time and money.



However, if the child does need to go to the emergency room, The UPCC specialist will call ahead to alert and inform the hospital staff so they are aware of the situation when you arrive. Here are specific actions to take if a poison exposure occurs:

If Swallowed	Do not induce vomiting. Doing so could cause more harm. Call the poison center right away. Don't wait for the person to show signs or symptoms of poisoning.
If Inhaled	Quickly get the person to fresh air. Try not to breathe the fumes. Open doors and windows. Call the poison center for help.
If on the skin	Remove contaminated clothing. Rinse skin continually with water for 15 minutes then wash gently with soap and water. Rinse again. Call the poison center for help.
If in the eyes	Quickly start rinsing the eye with lukewarm (not hot) water and continue for 15 minutes. Have the person blink as much as possible while rinsing the eye. Do not force eyelid open. Do not use eye drops. Call the poison center for help.

If the person is unconscious, having convulsions, or difficulty breathing, call 911.

Pick Up the Phone and Call

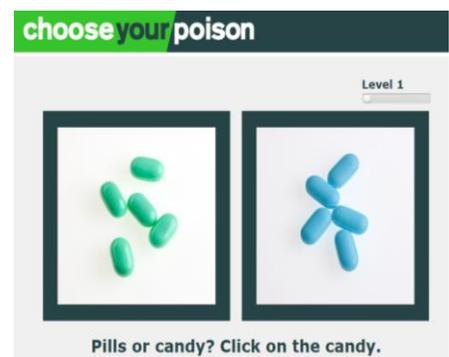
It is tempting to search the internet for answers when a poison exposure happens but doing so not only delays getting expert and personalized help, it also poses the risk of getting inaccurate and even dangerous information that could make matters worse. On a typical day the UPCC receives calls about a variety of potential exposures for people of all ages. Here are some examples of what it might be like to call the poison center when a child is experiencing a poison exposure:

<i>"This is poison control. May I help you"?...</i>	
Birth-12 Years	<p>--"I keep bleach in a spray bottle for laundry and my 2-year-old just sprayed herself in the face and eyes."</p> <p>--"I just gave my 4-year-old his 10-year-old brother's medication."</p> <p>--"My child came back from a hike with a rash on his arms and hands."</p> <p>--"At grandma's house, our toddler got hold of the pill minder box. Before we noticed, he had opened it and chewed on a pill."</p>
13-18 Years	<p>--"My daughter has a headache and took double the amount of Tylenol® she was supposed to."</p> <p>--"I drank from a sports drink bottle in the garage—turns out it was windshield washer fluid."</p> <p>--"My teenage son drank four energy drinks and now his heart is racing."</p> <p>--"We went camping and I think my 14-year-old got bit by a spider. The bite site is really painful."</p>

After gathering information from the caller, UPCC specialists will provide information on what to do next. The service is always free and confidential, so you don't need to worry about expense or embarrassment.

Ways to Help

During National Poison Prevention Week, everyone can do something to help prevent poisonings. Take steps to make your home safer and share information in your community. Visit the UPCC website utahpoisoncontrol.org to access newsletters, find lesson plans for all ages, order and share free education materials, access poison prevention tips, and view trending data. Engage with UPCC on social media on [Facebook](#), [Pinterest](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) @Utah Poison.



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