

Poison Safety ... it's up to you!



The Poison Control Center

 The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia | Hope lives here.

Issue 1, Summer 2011

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My child may have eaten something he shouldn't have...when should I think about making him vomit?

This is a common question and it used to be making a patient vomit was the first thing that came to mind. But, for poison emergencies, making the patient vomit is **NOT** usually the right answer. In fact, inducing vomiting is usually not necessary or actually may be harmful.

Ipecac is a plant extract and the syrup of ipecac is no longer available over the counter. Poison Control Centers and pediatricians recommended syrup of ipecac for many years as a way to empty the stomach before arrival to an emergency room or to decrease the amount of a substance to a non-toxic level. But, ipecac isn't used anymore as we found that many poisonings can be managed safely without inducing vomiting and the amount of material removed isn't all that significant.

Over the years, callers have asked The Poison Control Center about many other substances that can trigger vomiting. These include: raw eggs, salt water, milk, tickling the back of the throat with a spoon, sticking a finger in the throat. None are considered safe (or effective).

If you have a situation where someone swallowed something bad or took too much medicine, please call the Poison Help Line first. We are here to guide you 24 hours a day!

What is silica gel?

A call from parents about their toddler eating the beads from a silica gel packet, usually found in a shoe box, is common. What are some questions we may ask? First, we would want to know if the child was o.k. and if the child ate the whole packet or just the beads? The beads are essentially harmless to eat but the packet itself can choke a child if swallowed. Sometimes the packet that holds the beads may read: "Caution: do not eat," or have a skull and crossbones on it. Anything that can fit down a toilet paper tube is a choking hazard to children under 3 years of age. So while the silica gel beads are not a danger, the package that holds them is.



It *is* Easy Being Green*: Introducing the Poison Control Center's "Go Green" Initiative

Over the past 25 years, household cleaning substances have remained among the top five substances involved in poisoning exposure calls not only to the poison control center at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, but nationwide. Our Center's Director, Dr. Allison Muller, developed this program to teach kids and their families how to take simple steps for a greener and safer home! If you would like to receive our "Super Green" pencils and activity booklet for your family, please call our Education Line at 215-590-4848 or email: You can also preview our materials at www.poisoncontrol.chop.edu under "Resources for Families".

*based on the Muppet song: "It's Not Easy Being Green".

PCC -- We're Pushin' 25!

In 2011, The Poison Control Center is in its 25th year of responding to the calls from the parents of curious toddlers, from emergency room staff treating patients with overdoses, and from older adults with medication errors. Staffed by pharmacists and nurses, the emergency line operates 24 hours a day to answer poisoning questions, follow the progress of poisoned patients and educate medical professionals in toxicology.



This is a publication of the Poison Control Center.

The Poison Control Center (PCC) at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia is a non-profit regional poison control services provider offering a 24-hour-a-day emergency hotline for poisoning incidents and poison information. Information and treatment advice is available to the public and healthcare professionals at no charge.

Call 1-800-222-1222 for assistance.