

# More Poison Safety Games...

Have your children fill in the words to the puzzle. After every one has completed the activity, go over each answer them carefully.

Here's a coloring activity that take about 10 minutes. Have your children draw an "X" on each of the poisonous items and color in the items that are good for them. After every has completed the activity, go over each answer carefully and emphasize that medicine should only be taken when a parent or caregiver give it to them.



# POISON PEN NOTES

a publication of The Poison Control Center at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
 Special Parents' and Teachers' Edition      EMERGENCY: 1-800-222-1222      ADMINISTRATIVE: (215) 590-2003

### Poison Puzzle

**ACROSS**

- M \_ D \_ \_ I N E is not candy.
- Little children like to put everything in their \_ O U \_ \_ \_ .
- Bleach, drain cleaners, and furniture polish are all P O \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .
- If someone should be accidentally poisoned, you should C \_ \_ \_ the Poison Control Center right away.
- Poisons should be kept out of the R \_ \_ \_ H of children.
- Plants and plant B \_ R R \_ \_ \_ can be poisonous.

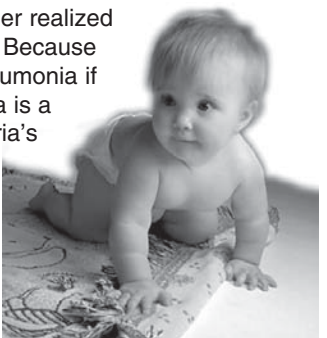
**DOWN**

- Always ask an AD \_ \_ \_ before tasting.
- We have to help protect our younger brothers and S \_ \_ T \_ R S.
- Poisons should not be kept under the S \_ \_ \_ .
- \_ \_ \_ K up all medicines.
- Poisons can be found in every room of your \_ \_ \_ S E.
- If you remember these Poison Prevention rules/ideas, you can S \_ V \_ someone's life.

### Put an X on the Poisons


## Poison Safety Around the House Don't let your child become a statistic!

Like most 11 month-old babies, Gloria's world is one of daily discovery. When her mother put down her mop to answer the phone, Gloria crawled over to the bottle of pine oil cleaner her mom had left open on the floor. The golden color looked just like her favorite juice, and it had an interesting smell, too. She picked up the bottle and drank a mouthful. Gloria started coughing and choking. That's when her mother realized what had happened and called The Poison Control Center. Because pine oil is a hydrocarbon, Gloria was at risk of chemical pneumonia if she inhaled the pine oil into her lungs. Chemical pneumonia is a potentially fatal illness, so the Poison Center instructed Gloria's mom to rush her to the nearest hospital emergency room for a chest X-ray and observation. Fortunately, her lungs were clear and Gloria and her mom were able to go home a couple hours later.



Wayne's grandmother had too many things going on at once. She was trying to clean the oven and feed Wayne's baby sister breakfast while the 2-year-old was playing on the floor. While grandma was wiping up the cereal that the baby spit out, Wayne suddenly started shrieking. He had licked that funny-looking stuff off the oven door, and it really hurt! Oven cleaners are highly alkaline and can cause severe burns. After calling The Poison Control Center, grandma rushed Wayne to his doctor. The boy's lips and mouth were red and swollen, but fortunately the oven cleaner hadn't gone down his throat. Esophageal burns can be life-threatening. The doctor washed out Wayne's mouth and kept him for observation for a couple hours before he, grandma and little sister could all go home.

540,181 children 1 year of age and under were poisoned in the U.S. in 2004


**Put an X on the Poisons**

**Poison Puzzle**

If you are a regular reader of Poison Pen Notes, you probably already know that children five years old and under are the most frequent victims of accidental poisonings. In 2003, 56.6% of the calls to our hotline involved children in this age group. Toddlers are particularly at risk. Their newly developed abilities to pick things up and crawl or walk around the house make them eager to explore, and they often do this by placing the objects they encounter in their mouths, just like Gloria. In addition, because of their size and developmental stage, just a small dose of many common medications or household products can be extremely toxic to a toddler.

Children can cause problems in young children such as seizures or dangerous changes in heart rate, blood pressure or central nervous system function. Statistics show that the vast majority of accidental poisonings happen at home. The Poison Control Center is here to help in an emergency, but there are limits to what we can do. That's why it's so important to poison-proof your home if you have small children, or if small children will be visiting your home.

### ATTENTION EDUCATORS

National Poison Prevention Week is the 3rd week of March -- every year. For more information, write to: Secretary, Poison Prevention Council, P.O. Box 1543, Washington, D.C. 20013 or visit their website at [www.poisonprevention.org](http://www.poisonprevention.org) Here are some more websites you may want to visit:

- <http://poisoncontrol.chop.edu>
- [www.epa.gov/oppt/kids/hometour/tour.htm](http://www.epa.gov/oppt/kids/hometour/tour.htm)
- [www.aspc.org/apcc\(animal poisonings\)](http://www.aspc.org/apcc(animal%20poisonings))

Here are some simple things you can do to prevent an accident from happening in the first place:



398,693 children 2 years of age were poisoned in 2004

- Always store harmful products well out of the reach of children and pets.
- Keep household products and medications in their original containers. Never store them in cans, cups or soda/juice bottles. Keep labels intact and readable.
- Purchase medications and household products in child-resistant containers whenever possible.
- When called to the phone or door while using a hazardous product, make sure to take the child or the product with you.
- Never refer to medicine as candy.
- Teach your children to recognize Mr. Yuk®. Explain that Mr. Yuk® means “**STAY AWAY!**”

Go through your house together, placing Mr. Yuk® stickers on the poisonous products in your home.

In case of an emergency, be sure The Poison Control Center’s phone number is on each phone in the house. (Phone stickers and Mr. Yuk® stickers are available from The Poison Control Center.)

Jimmy’s dad was busy preparing dinner late one afternoon while Jimmy was quietly watching his favorite video. A few minutes later, dad found Jimmy playing with his parent’s travel bag, which contained chewable children’s acetaminophen tablets and chewable 100 mg vitamin C tablets. Jimmy had opened both bottles and had several slightly chewed tabs in his mouth. His dad immediately wiped out his mouth and called The Poison Control Center. After calming and reassuring dad, the poison information specialist asked him several questions to determine how much of each product Jimmy could have swallowed. They figured that Jimmy ate only 2 vitamin C tabs. Unfortunately, he had also swallowed 20 of the acetaminophen tabs, a potentially dangerous quantity. Dad was instructed to give Jimmy syrup of ipecac and to call the PCC after Jimmy had vomited. Later that evening, the PCC staff called twice to check on him, and Jimmy did just fine. Dad was very thankful that he had syrup of ipecac at home and a PCC telephone sticker on the phone for immediate access to the Center for expert advice.



311,662 children age 3-5 years were poisoned in 2004

*\*All of the stories in this issue are loosely based on real cases which were handled by our hotline specialists. The names have been changed in consideration of the privacy of the families.*

## Poisonings by the Numbers\*

Did you know that in 2004:

- 2,438,644 human exposures were reported to our nation’s poison control centers?
  - 92.7% of all toxic exposures reported to poison centers occurred in the home or other residence?
  - 84.4% of all reported poisoning exposures were unintentional?
  - 73.9% of all reported human exposures were managed on-site (usually in the home)?
  - Peak call volume for The Poison Control Center was between the hours of 10 a.m. and 11 p.m.?
- The top 10 substances most frequently involved in pediatric exposures (under 6 years) were:
    - 1 Cosmetics and personal care products
    - 2 Cleaning substances
    - 3 Analgesics
    - 4 Topicals
    - 5 Foreign bodies
    - 6 Cough and Cold Preparations
    - 7 Plants
    - 8 Pesticides/Rodenticides
    - 9 Vitamins
    - 10 Antihistamines

*\*All statistics in this issue were taken from the 1997 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers’ national data collection system, published annually in the American Journal of Emergency Medicine.*

The Poison Control Center’s Children’s Education Program teaches children between the ages of three and six about the different forms of poisons, and how important it is to stay away from them. Our health educator has taught over 200,000 children in the five-county Philadelphia area, one classroom at a time.

Here are some simple lessons you can do at home with your children. If your children cannot read yet, you can teach them to be aware of poisonous products in and around your home, and to stay away from anything with a Mr. Yuk® sticker on it. Most importantly, you can teach them always to ask a grown-up before they put anything in their mouths. You can teach your older children to be aware of poisons, to check the labels of products for warnings, and to help watch out for younger brothers and sisters.



MR. YUK MEANS NO!

## Different Forms of Poisons

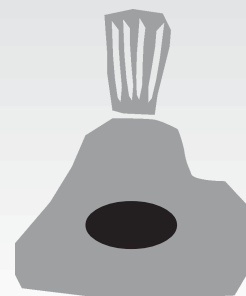


Tell your child that poisons can come in many forms, including solids, liquids, sprays and gases. Find objects in your home, cut out pictures from a magazine, or make a list together with examples of each.

- Show your child examples of **solid poisons** that would be harmful if eaten, such as medicine, vitamins, wild mushrooms/berries, plants, flowers, cigarettes and mothballs.
- Show your child examples of **liquid poisons** that would be harmful if swallowed, such as

mouthwash, windshield washer fluid, rubbing alcohol, alcoholic beverages, kerosene/gasoline and glue.

- Show your child examples of **sprays** that would be harmful if sprayed in the face or on the skin accidentally, such as perfume/cologne, furniture polish, air freshener, mace, hair spray and bug spray.
- With older children, discuss examples of **poison gases**, things they can’t see, touch or smell, such as carbon monoxide from car exhaust or a heating appliance.



# Poison Safety Games

❖ Here’s a fun way to reinforce the poison safety message with young children. Have a bag or box filled with various poisonous products that would be dangerous to eat, drink, or spray in the face or on the skin. In the same bag or box put various items that are good to eat or drink (fruit, cereal, juice, milk, etc.) As you pull out each item separately from the bag or box, have your children raise their hands and say “**STAY AWAY!**” if it’s poisonous, and if it’s good for them, have them clap their hands.

Be sure to emphasize that if your children are unsure what something is, they must ask their parents first before they touch it or put it in their mouths.

❖ To help your older children develop sound judgment, have them tell you what they should do if they were confronted with an unsafe situation. Present several “just suppose” questions and ask them what they would do. In each case, the correct answer is that they should always tell their parent/caregiver.

**Suppose** you were playing in the house and you found a box of pills or a bottle of medicine open with the safety cap off and on the table. What would you do?

**Suppose** your friend offered you some pills to take? What would you do?

**Suppose** you found your baby brother or sister playing with a can of cleaning powder. What would you do?

**Suppose** you were thirsty and you found a soda bottle in the garage where your father usually keeps his tools. What would you do?

**Suppose** you saw another child accidentally eat or drink something you thought might harm him or make him sick. What would you do?

**Suppose** you saw a can of gasoline or pool chemicals lying on the ground in the garage. What would you do?

Try these activities at home with your kids. It’s easy, it’s fun, and it could mean the difference between life and death.