

The holidays are not just a time for celebrations, but also a time for distractions and broken routines – when accidents can happen. Medication mistakes are common *holiday accidents* that can be avoided. Medications include prescription, over-the-counter, vitamins and herbal supplements.

Follow the *5 rights* when taking or giving medicine:

- **The right person.** Be sure that the right person is using the medicine and does not take another person's medicine.
- **The right dose.** Always check for the proper amount. Consider writing down each dose to be given.
- **The right medicine.** Read the label – each time to avoid making a mistake. Know the name of the medicine when giving or taking it.
- **The right time.** Follow the label and take medicine at the correct time of day. Some medications are used once a day, some four times a day.
- **The right way.** Follow instructions. Some medicines interact with certain foods, some need to be taken with food and some should not be taken with other medications.

When one of the above *rights* is a *wrong* – call the Washington Poison Center *right away* at **1 - 8 0 0 - 2 2 2 - 1 2 2 2**.

Other medicine safety tips:

- Offer your visitors a safe place to keep their medications, a locking box or drawer.
- Know the abbreviations for tablespoon (Tbsp.) and teaspoon (tsp.) – use a medication-measuring spoon or cup.
- Put your glasses on and turn on a light before taking or giving medication.
- Always use the child-resistant cap and remember they are not *childproof*.
- Store your pet's medication in a different location than human medicine.

When a medication error does occur, do not wait for the person to feel sick; call the Washington Poison Center right away at **1-800-222-1222**. If you are visiting another state, take the number with you; it works for the nearest poison center all across the United States.

The Poison Center is always free and open 24/7 – *even during the holidays!*

Expert Poison Information 24/7: 1-800-222-1222