

THE YUK REPORT

Expert Poison Information 24/7

Washington Poison Center

1-800-222-1222

Spring 2006

The 5 Rights of Medication Safety

Medications. The number one reason people call the Washington Poison Center is about a medicine. One in five children poisoned gets into their grandparent's medication. Older adults frequently take a double dose of their medicine. Pet owners mistakenly take their pet's medication. Teenagers think more is better. Medication mistakes can be avoided.

Follow the 5 rights when taking or giving medicine:

The right person. Be sure the right person is using the medicine and does not take another person's medication. Store your pet's medicine in a different location than human medication. Do not share medicines – a medicine is prescribed for you and only you.

The right dose. Always check for the proper amount. Consider writing down each dose for each medicine to be given or taken. Know the abbreviations for tablespoon (Tbsp.) and teaspoon

(tsp.). Use a medication-measuring spoon or cup. Never play doctor – twice the dose is not right unless advised by a doctor.

The right medicine. Read the label each time to avoid making a mistake. Put your glasses on if needed and always turn on a light in a dark room before taking or giving medication. Know the name of the medicine when giving or taking it.

rectally and should not be taken by mouth.

When one of the above *rights* is a *wrong* – call the Washington Poison Center *right away* at **1-800-222-1222**.

Correct storage of medication can also help stop a poisoning from happening. Always use the child-resistant cap and remember they are not *childproof*. A child under the age of four can open these containers in under four minutes—do not give medication bottles to a child as a toy. When you have a visitor in your home, offer a safe place to keep their medicines, a locking box or drawer.

Did you know...

- ... the Washington Poison Center helps a child every 12 minutes of every day?
- ... over 20 medication errors are reported to the WPC daily?
- ... parents are six times more likely to give the wrong dose of a liquid than a solid medication to their child?

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. Some medications are to be used topically (on the skin) or

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.

More info: www.wapc.org

From the Files

YUK @ WORK

I run a licensed daycare in my home and part of my enrollment packet includes poison information. I include stickers, a magnet, and brochures from the Washington Poison Center. I encourage my clients to use them and to call the Poison Center to ask for more, if needed. I use Mr. Yuk stickers on all products that are dangerous to the children and go over what the "little green face" means with every new child. All of my kids know to stay away from Mr. Yuk and to yell and scream for an adult if they ever see another child with one of these items.

I know it works, too. After lunch one day I was cleaning the table off with some bleach water. Before I could put it away I was distracted by a young new arrival and set the bottle far back on the kitchen counter. A climbing toddler decided he would help me clean the kitchen floor. One of my 4-year-olds saw this and yelled for me. She told me he had the "little green mad face" and was getting the floor all wet. Thanks to the Mr. Yuk stickers, my kids know that "Mr. Yuk means NO!" Only in their words, not mine.

Carol V., Marysville, WA

The Forms of Poison: Liquids

How many liquid poisons do you have in your home?

You probably counted the detergents, bleaches, polishes, insecticides, herbicides and pesticides. But did you remember the perfumes, ink for your printer, toothpaste, medicines and alcohol? Many of these products can harm children if used incorrectly or stored where a child can reach them.

Young children don't know poison can be in the form of a liquid. They also can't read the product name or the warning label. A child will often swallow rather than spit out the bitter or strange taste of a liquid because their taste buds are not fully developed.

Liquids are both thick and thin. Some are thin and clear like water. Others may be thick and syrupy (motor oil can look like pancake syrup), and still others may be as thick as a cream (to a hungry child a topical cream may look like ice cream). Liquid poison is tempting to a child, especially if it looks like



something a child thinks is good to eat or drink.

Liquid poison comes in many different kinds of containers – a cup, glass, tube or bottle. Some liquids aren't in any containers at all, like those found in contaminated lakes and rivers.

Because a wide variety of household products have a nice scent, a child often thinks the product is good to eat or drink. These products come

into the home each week along with the groceries. Since children learn by association, they may think that a bottle of furniture polish, which comes out of the same bag as a bottle of soda, is also good to drink, especially if it smells like fruit or another food product.

When there's a choice some say it's wise to select unscented cleaning products and other poisonous items or those with a scent a child will not associate with food or beverages, like pine. Examine product labels and packages. Avoid those that include especially bright colors, pretty illustrations or pictures of fruits and other foods.

Put a Mr. Yuk sticker on all your liquid poisons as a reminder that it needs to be put away out of reach and view of children. Teach children never to drink a liquid or eat a solid unless they ask a grown-up first, no matter how thirsty or hungry they are.

For more information on poison safety, visit www.wapc.org



March 19-25 is Poison Prevention Week

- Memorize the Poison Help Hotline telephone number: **1-800-222-1222**.
- Put on a puppet show about poison safety.
- Write a song or jingle about Mr. Yuk.
- Run a local poster contest.
- Visit www.wapc.org for more ideas!

Support Mr. Yuk

- ✓ The Washington Poison Center is a nonprofit, charitable organization relying on community support. To make a tax-deductible donation, send a check or money order to:

Washington Poison Center
155 NE 100th Street, #400
Seattle, WA 98125-8011

- ✓ Do you have an interesting story to tell about your experiences with the WPC or comments about our hardworking staff? We want to hear from you! Please send your stories or comments to the above address, email them to development@wapc.org or call **1-800-222-1222** and ask for an official "Tell us your story!" form to fill out. Your story may appear in a future issue of this newsletter.

Mr. Yuk thanks you for your help!



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