

THE YUK REPORT

Expert Poison Information 24/7

Washington Poison Center

1-800-222-1222

Summer 2010

Tweens & Inhalants: A Danger You Should Be Aware Of

WFor most parents, the idea of child-proofing ends once the child is old enough to walk and talk. But the need for child-proofing lasts even past the age when your child can go to a middle-school dance, play a school sport or baby-sit other children.

By the time your child becomes a teenager, poison dangers aren't as straightforward as keeping the cleaning supplies locked up. Substance abuse becomes a danger, and the things in your home that you rarely think twice about can become lethal to your "tween" or teenager.

Most people do not know about the dangers of inhalants and abuse often goes unnoticed. Inhalants are one of the most commonly used methods to get high among young adolescents. The *Monitoring the Future* surveys show that in 2009, **15% of eighth graders had abused inhalants in their lifetimes.**

Inhalants can be found in homes, schools and offices. More than 1,000 products can be inhaled for intoxicating effects. They are

easily available, low cost and in legal products rarely thought of as poisonous.

Common inhalants include gasoline products, paint remover, glue, "White-Out" correction fluid, markers, spray paints, medical anesthetics, room deodorizers and whipped cream dispensers.

Inhalation can lead to irregular rhythms in the heart, which in turn may lead to a heart attack. Inhalant abuse can cause suffocation by interfering with breathing or a person could choke. Long term inhalant abuse may cause the loss of normal function in arms, legs and loss of bladder and bowel control. Inhalants destroy brain cells. Most of these chemicals are fire hazards and could cause a fire or an explosion.

Signs that your child may be using inhalants include a drunk, dazed appearance; chemical smells on the breath, body or clothing; red eyes; runny noses or nose bleeds, personality changes; slurred speech; and an unusually large collection of paint, spray cans, room deodorizers or other inhalant products.

Talk to your kids about inhalant abuse. Tell them inhalants are poison and do not belong in the body. Talk about their "toxic effects," instead of "getting high." Refer to inhalants as chemicals or toxins. Not talking to your kids about inhalants could be a fatal mistake.

For more info: www.inhalants.org.

Did you know . . .

. . . in 2009, inhalant abuse cases reported to the WAPC were 3.5 times more likely to be fatal than ingestion abuse cases?

. . . almost 80% of calls made to the WAPC regarding berries were for kids under 5?

. . . poison hemlock is often confused with parsnip and wild carrots? Even a small bite of poison hemlock can be fatal.

Inhalants provide an immediate "high" that can last 1 to 5 minutes, sometimes longer. The effect is similar to drinking too much alcohol causing mind altering effects. Tell children that they *can* be lethal.

Abuse of inhalants can cause "sudden sniffing death" even the first time inhalants are used.

From the Files

8X NORMAL DOSE

The other day, I grabbed my daily medication and swallowed 4 pills. Within a minute or two of taking the medication I started to realize that something was desperately wrong.

I quickly grabbed the medication bottle and realized I had taken 8 times my normal dosage! I called my Pharmacist who instructed me to call Poison Control right away.

When I called, I reached the most amazing man on earth. He took what information I could provide, even though I had trouble speaking. He was calming and reassuring while he listened and asked me questions. He told me that I would be very sick, but it was not a lethal dose. He called me several times throughout that first 24 hours and even called 3 days later just to make sure I was okay. It has been a nightmarish 6 days, but I survived.

Poison Control is so much more than just helping people with small children. They helped me, an intelligent 45 year old woman that made a stupid mistake that could have cost me my life.

-- Melinda M., Kent WA

A Poisoned Vacation

Whether you are going away for a weekend or an extended vacation, unintentional poisonings can happen. When planning and packing for your vacation, keep poison prevention in mind.

Visiting a Relative or Friend's Home

Spending time in someone's home could mean that you are not familiar with the products they use and the places they are stored. They might be using medications that are unfamiliar to you. Take extra care if taking children into a home that does not have young children living there.

Familiarize yourself with where medicines, cleaning products and potentially poisonous products are stored. If you see products out that may be harmful, ask to have them stored elsewhere during your stay. Don't be afraid to ask. It is very likely the host is trying to make their home safe and missed a few hazards.

Ask for a safe place to store medications that you bring with you. Never leave them in your luggage or in a place where kids have access to them.

Have the toll-free Poison Help number with you, **1-800-222-1222**. It works anywhere in the nation.

Camping

Campers often pack only what is necessary on their trip. Products not normally stored together are now in the same pack. Proper planning is important to keep you and others safe when camping.

- Avoid taking products out of their original containers.

- Never store fuel sources or pesticides with or near food products.
- Take an inventory of your first aid kit and replace old and outdated items.
- Keep medicines and healthcare products in separate plastic baggies.
- Follow the rules for safe food handling, storage and preparation.
- Read the label when applying bug repellents and sun screen products.
- Don't assume that a plant is non-toxic if you see birds or other animals eating it.
- Have the number of the Poison Center with you, **1-800-222-1222**.
- Know your exact location in case you need to call 911.



Traveling Out of State

Each area of the world is unique in the foods, plants, and animals that reside there. Some may be poisonous or could cause an allergic reaction. If you are traveling to a place you have never visited it is a good idea to become familiar with the natural habitats of your destination spot such as:

- Reptiles* – venomous snakes and lizards
- Arachnids* – venomous spiders, scorpions, mites and ticks
- Vegetation* – Plants, mushrooms, and wild fruit
- Hymenoptera* – bees, wasps, flies and ants

Wherever you are going and while staying at home, keep poison prevention in mind and the Poison Help Hotline close by, **1-800-222-1222**.

Save the Date

An Evening of Wine & Chocolate
benefiting the Washington Poison Center

Thursday, September 30, 2010
6:30 - 9:30 pm

Join us for an elegant evening with *great wine, great chocolate & great friends* while supporting the Washington Poison Center.

Support Mr. Yuk

Click online to donate at www.wapc.org:

WAPC is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Follow Mr. Yuk Online:

facebook.com/MrYukWA
twitter.com/MrYukWA

Call 1-800-222-1222 for:
Poison Emergencies
Plant Toxicity
Medication Questions
Mr. Yuk Stickers

and More! (does not need to be an emergency to call)

Come meet Mr. Yuk @ the Seattle Children's Museum on May 29th from 11-1pm

Located in the lower level of the Center House on the campus of Seattle Center near the Space Needle!

