

POISON PREVENTION

... It's in your hands

You have the power to prevent poisoning.



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our goal is **healthy** children
www.skprevention.ca

This guide is for anyone who works with children and their families, and can be used to educate children and families about home and personal safety related to poisoning prevention. There are activities for both children and adults in the guide. There are activity pages at the end of the guide that can be photocopied.

Links to Saskatchewan Health Education Curriculum Outcomes (Kindergarten to Grade 4)

USCK.2

Establish behaviours that support safety of self and others (including safety at school and at home).

USC1.1

Examine healthy behaviours and opportunities and begin to determine how these behaviours and opportunities may affect personal well-being.

USC2.5

Recognize potential safety risks in community "play areas" and determine safe practices/behaviours to identify, assess, and reduce the risks.

USC3.3

Determine how the misuse of helpful and the use of harmful substances (including tobacco) affect the health of self and others.

USC3.5

Evaluate safe behaviours/practices to increase the safety of self and others while at home.

USC4.4

Determine basic personal responsibility for safety and protection in various environments/situations.

Why are young children more likely to be poisoned?

Young children are naturally curious and like to explore. Children come into closer contact with their environment than adults by crawling on the floor, picking things up to touch, and by tasting things. Children often explore the world around them by putting things in their mouths. Children are more sensitive to harmful substances than adults, and **many everyday items are dangerous to children in even small doses**. For example, small amounts of adult medications or personal care products, such as mouthwash, can be fatal to a young child. Children do not understand the danger of poisons and need the help of adults around them.

Poisoning is the second leading cause of injury-related hospitalization for children under the age of 10 in Saskatchewan. Medication is the leading cause of these poisonings.

Objectives of this resource

1. Define what a poison is.
2. Identify the types of poisons and where they can be found.
3. Describe ways to stay safe from poisons.
4. Describe ways to protect younger children from poisoning.
5. Describe what to do if a poisoning or suspected poisoning occurs.

YouTube Video Links

*** Please note that some of the videos are from the United States and the Poison Centre phone number is different for Canada.** Saskatchewan's Poison Control Centre phone number is **1-866-454-1212**.

Preschool

https://youtu.be/_p3f6cS6NK8

Poison Prevention

<https://youtu.be/Zss-ohX8bvk>

Stop! Ask First

https://youtu.be/7_wKRrugpGI

Spike's Poison Prevention Adventure

School-Age Children

<https://youtu.be/RiJ0D-ut0qs> 2020

National Poison Prevention Week Video Contest Grand Prize Winner, Ryan from Auburn, Washington

Additional Resources

Saskatchewan Prevention Institute

<https://skprevention.ca/safety/poisoning/>

Parachute

<https://parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/poisoning/>

Injury Prevention Centre

<https://www.injurypreventioncentre.ca/campaigns/poison-prevention>

Child Safety Link

<https://childsafetylink.ca/safety-at-home/poison-prevention/>

WHAT IS A POISON?

A poison is something that can make you sick if you eat it or touch it. Poisons come in all shapes and sizes and in many different types of containers. An item that is useful (e.g., medicine, vitamins, cleaners) can be toxic if used in the wrong way (i.e., taken too much, taken by the wrong person, used in the wrong way). Poisons can injure and damage tissues (e.g., skin) and organs (e.g., stomach).

Poison gets into the body by:

- a) MOUTH (swallowing a poison)
- b) NOSE (breathing a poison)
- c) EYES (getting poison in eyes)
- d) SKIN (getting poison on skin)
- e) INJECTION (insect bites or needles)

Child & Adult Activity 1: Be a Super Hero*

Use your super powers to help make your home safe. Take this checklist home to do with an adult.

Check off the poisons that your family has stored safely.

- ✓ All medicines and vitamins
- ✓ Paint remover, turpentine
- ✓ House plants
- ✓ Cosmetics
- ✓ Disinfectants
- ✓ Hand sanitizer
- ✓ Cannabis
- ✓ Electronic cigarettes
- ✓ Deodorants and air fresheners
- ✓ Soaps, detergents, shampoo
- ✓ Cleaning supplies, toilet bowl and drain cleaners, sprays, lye, bleach, polishers, cleaning powders
- ✓ Kerosene, lighter fluids
- ✓ Moth balls, pesticides, insect repellent, ant and rat poison, slug bait

Draw a locked cabinet or box.

Keep Saskatchewan's Poison Control Centre phone number **1-866-454-1212** stored in your contacts and beside any telephones in the home.

**Note: This activity sheet can be found at the back of this Guide for photocopying.*

TYPES OF POISONS AND WHERE POISONS CAN BE FOUND

Poisons can be found inside and outside of homes (e.g., yards, garages), schools, and daycares. Poison can be in the products that are used every day, including the following (and more!):

- Cleaners – chemicals or other products in the house or yard
- Medicines – if too much is taken or taken by the wrong person
- Foods – some types of plants, berries, mushrooms, and baked items (e.g., brownies with cannabis)

Poisons may be found in different forms:

- Powder/solids (e.g., pills, rat poison)
- Liquids (e.g., mouthwash, liquid cough and cold medicine, cleaning products, automobile chemicals)
- Sprays (e.g., furniture polish, bug spray)
- Gas (e.g., carbon monoxide, exhaust fumes, smoke)

Child & Adult Activity 2: Super EYES Word Search*

Be a super hero and find the following poison-related words below. Words can be found forward, backward, up, or down.

CLEANER
EXHAUST
MOUTHWASH
CHEMICAL

MEDICINE
CANNABIS
SANITIZER
SPRAY

POWDER
LIQUID
GAS
HOUSE

YARD
GARAGE

Answer Key:

C	L	E	A	N	E	R	S
H	M	A	M	B	X	C	A
O	O	D	E	E	H	F	N
U	U	C	D	G	A	S	H
S	T	G	I	H	U	I	A
E	H	J	C	K	S	L	N
M	W	N	I	S	T	O	D
C	A	N	N	A	B	I	S
P	S	Q	E	N	R	S	T
C	H	E	M	I	C	A	L
U	V	W	X	T	E	Y	I
Z	A	B	C	I	G	D	Q
S	D	E	F	Z	A	R	U
P	O	W	D	E	R	A	I
R	G	S	P	R	A	Y	D
H	I	J	K	L	G	M	N

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STAY SAFE FROM POISONS

- a) If you see something that is poisonous, has a hazard symbol on it, or you don't know what it is - do not touch it, taste it, or smell it. Tell an adult.
- b) Always take medicine with parent/adult supervision. Never take medicine that belongs to someone else, and never share your medicine with anyone else.
- c) Do not play with things that could be poisonous.
- d) If you are home alone, know where your parents are and how they can be reached in emergencies.

Hazard Symbols

Hazard symbols are used on products to help identify dangerous materials.

Hazard symbols have three parts:

1. the picture
2. the frame
3. the caution (signal) words underneath the image

1. Picture

The picture tells you the type of danger.



EXPLOSIVE

The container can explode if heated or punctured. Flying pieces of metal or plastic from the container can cause serious injury, especially to your eyes.



CORROSIVE

The product can burn your skin or eyes. If swallowed, it can damage your throat and stomach.



FLAMMABLE

The product or its fumes will catch fire easily if it is near heat, flames, or sparks. Rags used with this product may begin to burn on their own.



POISON

If you swallow, lick, or, in some cases, breathe in the chemical, you could become very sick or die.

2. Frame

The **shape of the frame** around the hazard symbol tells you **what part of the product is dangerous**.



If it's a **triangle**, it means that the **container** is dangerous (e.g., the container is explosive).



If it's an **octagon**, it means the **contents** are dangerous (e.g., the contents are corrosive).

3. Signal Words

The **signal word(s)** underneath the hazard symbol explain the **degree of risk**:

Symbol



Signal Word - **DANGER EXPLOSIVE**

The meaning of the signal words are as follows.

- **CAUTION** – temporary injury may result. Death may occur with extreme exposure.
- **DANGER** – may cause temporary or permanent injury, or death.
- **EXTREME DANGER** – exposure to very low amounts may cause death or serious injury.

Images accessed February 2021 from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-safety/household-chemical-safety.html#a4>.

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PROTECT CHILDREN FROM POISONING

It is the responsibility of parents and caregivers to make changes around the home to protect children from poisoning. On the next page you will find a resource that can be shared with parents. It provides information about how to protect children from poisons around the home.

The following are examples of things that can be done to help prevent unintentional poisoning.

1. Identify potential poisons in and around the home (e.g., medications, cleaning products, pesticides, products that contain alcohol, certain plants, cosmetics, soaps, detergents, e-cigarettes). Talk about what is a poison and what is not a poison.
2. Store all poisons and medications safely. If possible, keep medications in a locked box out of the sight and reach of children. Medications are the leading cause of unintentional poisoning.
3. Adults should take medications out of the sight of young children. Why? Children often copy the actions of adults in their lives. Never refer to medicine as “candy” because it can easily confuse young children.
4. Learn to recognize hazard symbols and what they mean. Always read the label before using any product to make sure it is being used correctly. Adults should avoid using potentially poisonous cleaning products when young children are in the room.
5. Keep visitors’ bags and coats out of sight and reach of children. Some people carry medications and other potential poisons with them.
6. Keep Saskatchewan’s Poison Control Centre phone number **1-866-454-1212** stored in your contacts and beside any telephones in the home.

PROTECT CHILDREN FROM POISONING

Identify potential poisons in and around the home (e.g., medications, cleaning products, pesticides, products that contain alcohol, certain plants, cosmetics, soaps, detergents, e-cigarettes). Talk with children about what is a poison and what is not a poison.

Drugs and medications are the leading cause of unintentional poisoning. Store all poisons and medications out of sight and reach of children. If possible, keep medications in a locked box. **Remember, many children can open “child resistant” containers. Potential poisons should always be kept out of sight and out of reach of children.**

Take medications out of the sight of children. Children often copy the actions of the adults in their lives. Never refer to medicine as “candy” because it can easily confuse young children.

Keep visitors’ bags and coats out of sight and out of reach of children. Some people carry medications and other potential poisons with them.

Teach older children to recognize hazard symbols and what they mean. Always read the label before using any product to make sure it is being used correctly. Avoid using potentially poisonous cleaning products when children are in the room. **Mixing different cleaning products can make a poisonous gas.**

Always keep products in their original packaging or make sure they are properly labelled. This will allow you to quickly identify the product and its ingredients if a child gets into it.

Do not re-use chemical containers to store other materials. Follow directions on containers for proper disposal. Do not let children play with chemical containers. **Whenever possible, buy household products that come fitted with child-resistant caps.**

Install carbon monoxide detectors on all levels of your home and outside of sleeping areas. Test monthly and replace batteries every six months.

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COVID-19 Poison Prevention Tip: Supervise young children when using hand sanitizer.

Supervision of children, especially young children, is an important way to prevent unintentional poisoning. It can be difficult to keep children in view at all times. This is why it is important that potential poisons are always kept out of sight and reach of children.

Child & Adult Activity 4: Fill in the Blanks*

Use your super thinking powers to finish these poison prevention sentences.

Use the words listed below to fill in the blanks.

Only 7 of the following words will be used.

Caution

Hazard

Fatal

Illness

Flammable

Toxic

Harmful

Danger

Poison

1. Small amounts of adult medications can be fatal to a young child.
2. Children do not understand danger and are more sensitive to harmful substances than adults.
3. Hazard symbols tell us why some products are dangerous.
4. This word means 'may catch fire easily': flammable.
5. Always store poison out of the sight and out of the reach of children.



6. This hazard symbol means toxic or poison.

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KNOW WHAT TO DO IF A POISONING OR SUSPECTED POISONING OCCURS

Keep Saskatchewan's Poison Control Centre phone number **1-866-454-1212** stored in your contacts and beside any telephones in the home. If you think that someone has been poisoned, contact the Poison Control Centre immediately. If the person is not conscious, dial 911.

Talk with children about what they would do in the following situations.

1. Your little brother goes into the kitchen and is reaching for the cold medicine that is sitting on the counter. What would you do? Why?
2. You are playing in your home and you find a box of pills on the floor. What would you do? Why?
3. You and a friend are playing hide-and-seek. You find your friend in the bathroom cabinet under the sink sitting near cleaning products. What would you do? Why?
4. You go to the garage to get a hockey stick. There is a soda bottle on the counter. It looks like apple juice. Would you taste it? Why or why not?
5. Your family is on a walk and you see a bush with pretty red berries on it. Would it be okay to eat any of the berries? Why or why not?

These situations are a good time to remind children of the ways to stay safe from poisons as found in Activity 3.

Potential responses

1. Tell him to not touch the medicine. Make sure the container is closed and ask an adult to lock up the medicine.
2. Tell an adult and ask the adult to lock up the medicine.
3. Tell your friend that those cleaners could be poison and to not touch or taste them. Ask an adult to move the cleaning products away from children.
4. No. Tell an adult that you don't know what it is and ask them to put it away.
5. No. You don't know if the berries are poisonous or toxic.

Child Activity 5: What Do You Do?*

You're helping your aunt take care of your baby cousin. You find the baby with a pill bottle, but the bottle is almost empty. What should you do?

Fill in the blanks with numbers (1-5) to show the order of the steps you should take. Put an X beside the two things you should not do in this situation.

4 Ask your aunt to call the Poison Centre.

1 Check the baby's mouth. Gently remove any pills with your finger.

3 Tell your aunt what happened.

2 Take the pill bottle to your aunt.

X Watch a cartoon with the baby.

5 Help your aunt lock all medication out of sight and out of reach of the baby.

X Eat some of the pills.

Keep Saskatchewan's Poison Control Centre phone number **1-866-454-1212** stored in your contacts and beside any telephones in the home.

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Activity Pages



The following activities can be photocopied.

Be a Super Hero!

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- Kerosene, lighter fluids
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Draw a locked cabinet or box.

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Super EYES Word Search

Be a super hero and find the following poison-related words below.
Words can be found forward, backward, up, or down.



- | | | |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|
| CLEANER | POWDER | GARAGE |
| EXHAUST | LIQUID | CHEMICAL |
| MOUTHWASH | GAS | YARD |
| MEDICINE | SPRAY | SANITIZER |
| CANNABIS | HOUSE | |

C	L	E	A	N	E	R	S
H	M	A	M	B	X	C	A
O	O	D	E	E	H	F	N
U	U	C	D	G	A	S	H
S	T	G	I	H	U	I	A
E	H	J	C	K	S	L	N
M	W	N	I	S	T	O	D
C	A	N	N	A	B	I	S
P	S	Q	E	N	R	S	T
C	H	E	M	I	C	A	L
U	V	W	X	T	E	Y	I
Z	A	B	C	I	G	D	Q
S	D	E	F	Z	A	R	U
P	O	W	D	E	R	A	I
R	G	S	P	R	A	Y	D
H	I	J	K	L	G	M	N

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Fill in the Blanks

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Harmful

Danger

Poison

1. Small amounts of adult medications can be _____ to a young child.
2. Children do not understand _____ and are more sensitive to _____ substances than adults.
3. _____ symbols tell us why some products are dangerous.
4. This word means 'may catch fire easily': _____
5. Always store _____ out of the sight and out of the reach of children.



6. This hazard symbol _____ means _____ or poison.

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What do you do?

You're helping your aunt take care of your baby cousin. You find the baby with a pill bottle, but the bottle is almost empty. What should you do?

Fill in the blanks with numbers (1-5) to show the order of the steps you should take. Put an X beside the two things you should not do in this situation.

- _____ Ask your aunt to call the Poison Centre.
- _____ Check the baby's mouth. Gently remove any pills with your finger.
- _____ Tell your aunt what happened.
- _____ Take the pill bottle to your aunt.
- _____ Watch a cartoon with the baby.
- _____ Help your aunt lock all medication out of the sight and out of the reach of the baby.
- _____ Eat some of the pills.



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