

# Poison Prevention Manual





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## Common Terms and Definitions

**Poison**- Any substance which may cause harm or death if it gets into your body.

Poisons can enter the body by ingestion (being swallowed), ocular exposure (splashed in the eye), dermal exposure (splashed on the skin), inhalation (breathed in) and by bites or stings of an animal or insect.

**Georgia Poison Center (GPC)**- Call center where Georgia citizens can call for to report a poisoning or get information about poisons.

**Herbicides**- Weed killers

**Fungicide**- Fungi Killer (mushroom killer)

**Rodenticides**- Rate or mice killer

**Insecticides**- Insect killer

**Carbon Monoxide (CO)**- a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can kill a person in minutes.

## Poisoning Statistics

- Drug poisoning is now the leading cause of injury death in the U.S. and has increased by more than 300 percent over the last three decades. Almost 90 percent of poisoning deaths can be attributed to illicit and licit drugs, with prescription drugs accounting for the majority of the drug overdose deaths.
- Among people ages 25-64, unintentional poisoning caused more deaths than motor vehicle crashes. In 2010, unintentional poisonings contributed to 831,295 emergency department visits, totaling over 2,000 people a day. More than 60,000 young children are seen in emergency departments each year because they got into medication when adult supervision was lacking.
- According to the 2012 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System, 3.3 million cases were managed by the 57 poison centers, an average of more than 9,000 calls per day. Since 2000, poison exposures with serious outcomes have increased 4.6 percent per year. Eighty percent of poisonings were unintentional and 16 percent were intentional.
- In 2013, the Georgia Poison Center (GPC) handled 73,331 human exposure calls and 10 animal exposure calls. All calls received by the GPC, including informational calls totaled 88,579.
- It is important to note that many poisonings go unreported to poison centers. Instead of calling poison centers, victims seek help at emergency departments and physician offices or remain at home without care. As a result, the number of poisonings reported to the AAPCC and poison centers throughout the nation is not a complete picture of the poisoning problem.
- An estimated \$213 billion in 2012 healthcare spending in the United States was due to improper and unnecessary use of medicines, equivalent to eight percent of the nation's total healthcare spending in 2012.

## Risk Factors

There are several risk factors associated with unintentional poisoning. These factors include the following:

Lack of Supervision- Children left alone, even for a few moments, are at **greatest** risk of poisoning.

Improper Storage- Potential poisons that are left within reach of children increase their risk of poisoning. Be aware that household products and medicines that are stored in child-resistant packaging are not "child proof." Children may be able to open these containers.

Children's Curious Nature- Children are curious and they like to explore. Sometimes they taste and inhale unsafe products or even get unsafe products on their skin or in their eyes.

Children Mimic Adult Behavior- Children often mimic the behavior of adults. For example, children might take a medicine because they saw an adult take it.

Failing to Read and Follow Directions- Failure to read and follow directions on product labels is a common reason adults get poisoned.

# Poisons Found in Your Facility

Some of the most common household and personal care products can be very hazardous. These include, but are not limited to: cleaning substances, laundry products, cosmetics, garden supplies, automotive products, pesticides, toys, fuels, paints, and pool products.

Children are often attracted to the bright colors, interesting containers and sweet-smells of household products. Often household products are mistaken by children for something that is good for them to eat or drink. For example, a liquid cleaner may be mistaken for juice. Do not rely on the smell or taste of a household product to deter children.

Tips to prevent household product poisoning:

- Lock up cleaning products, pesticides, auto products, garage products, and cosmetics where children cannot see or reach them.
- Store chemicals and cleaning products in their original containers.
- Do not reuse empty cleaning containers.
- Post the number to the GPC near all phones.

Be aware of the following products that might be found in and around the home/facility. Make sure they are stored in locked cabinets out of the reach of children.

<b>Kitchen/Laundry Area</b>	<b>Bedroom</b>	<b>Living Room/Common</b>
Air fresheners	Cologne/perfume	Tobacco Products
Ammonia	Make up	Alcohol
Bleach	Medicine	Poisonous Plants*
Bug Killers	Lotions	Medications
Carpet/upholstery cleaners	Plants	
Dishwasher detergent		
		<b>Other Storage Areas (Garage/Basement/Closets)</b>
Disinfectant	<b>Yard/Plaveround</b>	Mothballs
Drain cleaners	Poisonous Plants/Shrubs/Trees*	Paint/Paint Thinner
Fabric softener	Bug Killer	Rodent Killer
Floor cleaners	Fertilizer	Cleaning Products
Furniture polishes	Biting insects	Fertilizer
Laundry Detergent	Weed Killers	Gasoline
Alcohol		
Metal cleaners	<b>Classroom</b>	
Oven cleaners	Cleaning Products	
Medicine	Bug spray	
Poisonous Plants*	Sun screens	
Rust removers	Poisonous Plants*	
Spot remover	Medicines	
Spray starches	Lotions	
	Diapering ointments	
	Air fresheners	
	Glue	

The attached table lists common plants known to be toxic when ingested. While this is not a complete list, it contains many plants commonly found in home landscapes in Georgia.

The purpose of this list is to familiarize you with some of the common plants known to have poisonous properties when ingested. Please note, that the term “POISONOUS” does not imply that the plant is fatal. Some plants may be only mildly toxic and may cause stomach ache or mild irritation of the mouth and throat when ingested. There are also a number of variables that determine how severe the poisoning symptoms may be, such as the age, weight and health status of a person in relationship to the quantity of the plant ingested as well as the form that the plant was in at the time of ingestion. It is not the intent to discourage you from planting any of the plants on the list, but to make you aware of their potential hazard.

**Ornamental plants reported to be toxic when ingested by humans**

<i>American Ivy/Virginia Creeper</i>
<i>Autumn Crocus</i>
<i>Azalea / Rhododendron</i>
<i>Belladonna / Deadly Nightshade</i>
<i>Birch Tree</i>
<i>Bird of Paradise</i>
<i>Bittersweet / Woody Nightshade</i>
<i>Caladium / Elephants Ear</i>
<i>Castor Oil Plant / Castor Bean</i>
<i>Chinese Lantern / Cape</i>
<i>Choke Cherry / Chokeberry</i>
<i>Devil's Ivy / Pothos</i>
<i>Dieffenbachia / Dumb Cane Elder (bark, shoots, leaves, roots, unripe berries)</i>
<i>Dogbane</i>
<i>Elephant's Ear / Philodendron</i>
<i>Foxglove</i>
<i>Holly (berries, leaves)</i>
<i>Jequirity / Rosary Pea</i>
<i>Jimsonweed</i>
<i>Larkspur</i>
<i>Lily of the Valley</i>
<i>Mayapple</i>
<i>Mistletoe</i>
<i>Monkshood</i>
<i>Morning Glory (seeds)</i>
<i>Peace Lily</i>
<i>Poison Hemlock</i>
<i>Poison Ivy, Oak, Sumac</i>
<i>Pokeweed / Pokeberry</i>
<i>Poppy</i>
<i>Red Buckeye / Horse Chestnut</i>
<i>Water Hemlock</i>
<i>Wild Mushrooms</i>
<i>Yew</i>

Tips to Prevent Plant Poisoning:

- Know the names of all the plants in your home/facility and yard/playground.
- Label all plants with their names so you can identify a plant if it is eaten.
- Keep house plants, seeds, and bulbs out of reach of children.
- Do not eat wild plants or mushrooms: cooking poisonous plants does not make them safe to eat.
- Remove mushrooms growing in your yard/playground and throw them away in a covered garbage can.
- Teach the children in your care to never put any part of a plant into their mouths.



Photos of Poisonous Plants



Poison Ivy



Poison Oak



Poison Sumac



Birch Tree



Elephant Ears/Philodendron

# Medicines

More than 90% of poisonings reported to the Georgia Poison Center in 2013 involved medicines. This included both prescription and over-the-counter. Medicine can be dangerous if used incorrectly or if the wrong amount is taken.

A common cause of medication poisoning occur from dosing errors (taking too much, taking within close time frames, taking the wrong medicine, or administering medication the wrong way).

Another cause of medication poisoning occurs from drug interaction. Drug interaction occurs when medication interacts with a certain food, herbal product, alcohol, or another medication. Taking some over-the-counter medications with prescription medication can cause serious problems. Additionally taking some medications with certain foods can lessen the effects of the medication.

Tips to prevent medication poisoning:

- Store medicine and vitamins in locked cabinets out of the reach of children.
- Keep medicine and vitamins in the original container.
- Return expired, leftover, or medication that is missing a label to the parents/guardian.
- Always read the labels before giving medication; check the name, expiration date and directions.
- Ask the parents about any food or drinks that might react with the medication. (Those foods should be avoided while the child is on the medication.)
- Never administer medicine that belongs to someone else.
- After each dose, record the time, date and name of the medicine that was given.
- If you forget to administer the medication at the correct time, do not double dose.
- Never call medicine "candy."
- Never give extra medicine if some gets spilled.
- Use a correct measuring spoon; do not use a kitchen spoon.
- Make sure you know the difference between a tablespoon and a teaspoon.

# Pesticides

Pesticides are chemicals used to destroy, prevent, or control pests. However, these products can be very harmful if used the wrong way. Pesticides commonly used in and around the home are herbicides (weed killers), fungicides (fungi killers), rodenticides (rat and mice killers), and insecticides (insect killers).

Pesticides come in many different forms:

- Aerosols
- Sprays
- Dusts
- Granular materials
- Baits.

Legally, all pesticide labels must include the following:

- Product Name
- Manufacture's Name
- Active Chemical Ingredients
- Type of Chemical (herbicide, insecticide, etc.)
- Recommendations for specific use
- Directions for use
- Precautions
- First-aid Instructions
- Storage and Disposal Information

Tips to prevent pesticide poisoning include:

- Always read the label before using a pesticide and follow the directions carefully.
- Store pesticides in a well-ventilated area; out of reach and sight of children.
- Never put pesticides in cabinets where food, medicines, or cleaning materials are stored.
- Always keep pesticides in their original containers and never remove the label.
- Before treating an area with a pesticide, remove any toys, food, furniture and other equipment. Wait until the area is dry before replacing the removed items.
- Mix chemicals outdoors.
- Always clean up any spills right away.
- Apply pesticides only under appropriate weather conditions; never spray or dust outdoors on a windy day or while children are present.
- Do not place insect or rodent baits within children's reach.
- Read the label for proper storage and disposal instructions.
- Wash your hands and any other body parts that were exposed to the pesticide with water and soap after each use.

# Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can kill a person in minutes. It is produced wherever fuel, such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. If appliances that burn fuel are maintained and used properly, the amount of carbon monoxide that is produced is harmless.

Carbon monoxide is one of the leading causes of poisoning deaths in the United States. Early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning can mimic the flu or other illnesses. Carbon monoxide poisoning can lead to unconsciousness and death. Some symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may include:

- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Difficulty breathing
- Confusion
- Fainting

The most common sources of carbon monoxide are:

- Oil, wood, or gas furnaces
  - Space heaters (kerosene heaters)
  - Gas or oil water heaters
  - Gas stoves
  - Gas dryers
  - Fireplaces and wood stoves
  - Charcoal grills
  - Automobiles
  - Lawn mowers and other gas powered lawn equipment
- Tips to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:
- Have fuel-burning appliances, venting and chimney systems in your facility inspected each year.
  - Use an exhaust fan when using a gas stove.
  - Do not use an oven or gas range to heat your facility.
  - Never use charcoal grills inside your facility.
  - Have exhaust systems in your vehicles inspected for possible leaks.
  - Install at least one carbon monoxide detector in your facility.

# Food Poisoning

Food poisoning occurs when food contaminated by bacteria, parasite, or virus is eaten. Symptoms range from mild to severe and include upset stomach, abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, and dehydration.

Tips to prevent food poisoning:

- Check the expiration dates of all foods, especially meats, poultry and dairy products; do not buy or use foods beyond their expiration date.
- Do not use canned goods with bulges, leaks or dents.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water before and after handling food or using the bathroom.
- Keep raw foods separate from ready to eat foods; this prevents cross contamination from one food to another.
- Wash utensils and cutting boards after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry and before they touch other foods.
- Use one plate for preparing raw meat and another plate for after the meat is cooked.
- Refrigerate or freeze perishable food within two hours after buying or preparing.
  - If room temperature is above 90 degrees Fahrenheit, refrigerate perishable foods within one hour.
- Cook meat, poultry, and seafood thoroughly. Meats should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly to remove visible dirt.
- Set refrigerators temperature to 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
- Set freezer temperatures to 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
- Defrost food safely, using one of the following methods:
  - In the refrigerator- wrap meat, poultry, and fish so that the juices from the meat do not drip on other foods. After defrosting, cook ground meat, poultry, and fish within two days. Other meats should be cooked within five days.
  - In the microwave- use the "defrost" or "50 percent power" setting to avoid cooking the edges of the food. Cook food immediately after defrosting in a microwave.
  - In cold water- put food in a sealed package or plastic bag and immerse in cold water; change the water every 30 minutes or place the sealed package under cold, running water. Cook food immediately after defrosting with this method.
- Throw out any leftovers that have been at room temperature for more than two hours or in hot weather for more than one hour.
- If hot food must be out for longer than two hours, use a cooler or ice bucket.
- Do not eat any food you are unsure about. When in doubt throw it out.

# Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning is a disease caused most often by eating paint chips or breathing or eating lead dust. Lead is especially harmful to infants and children ages six years and younger because their small bodies absorb lead more easily. Lead poisoning can slow a child's development and cause learning and behavioral problems. Small amounts of lead can also damage a child's brain, kidneys, and stomach.

Some possible sources of lead include:

- Peeling or chipping paint in facilities built before 1978
- Dust from sanding or removing old paint or wallpaper
- Soil around on older facility that has chipping exterior paint.
- Old lead pipes
- Some imported pottery, candies, canned foods and mini-blinds
- Lead glazed ceramics, china and lead crystal glassware
- Inexpensive costume jewelry

Tips to prevent lead poisoning:

- Clean up chipping or peeling paint from inside and outside of your facility.
- Clean up paint chips and lead dust on window sills and on the floor near the windows and doorways. You should use a damp mop or cloth and a special lead cleaning product.
- Have paint checked by an environmentalist if you are remodeling a facility built before 1978.
- Wash children's toys often.
- Throw away lead-painted toys or clothes.
- Never store food in open cans or pottery.
- Buy pottery with lead free glazes.

## Sting and Bites of Insects, Spiders, Snakes and Fish

Most people that are stung or bitten by an insect, spider, snake, or fish will have redness, itching, swelling, and some pain around the site. Some people are allergic to stings and bites and may experience hives, rash, itching palms, itching feet, headaches, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and/or difficulty breathing. If any of these reactions occur, the injured person should go to the hospital or doctor right away.

Below is a list of the most common insects, spiders, snakes, and fish that can cause poisoning:

<b>Insects</b>	<b>Spiders</b>	<b>Snakes</b>	<b>Fish</b>
Bees	Black Widows	Copperhead	Catfish
Fire Ants	Brown Recluses	Coral Snake	Jellyfish
Hornets		Cottonmouth	Portuguese Man of Water
Saddleback Caterpillars		Eastern Diamond Back Rattle	Stingrays
Scorpions		Pygmy Rattle Snake	
Ticks		Timber Rattle Snake	
Wasps		Water Moccasin	
Yellow Jackets			

Tips to prevent poisoning from stings and bites:

- Apply insect repellent containing up to 50% DEET and 15% picardin to your clothing and sparingly to your skin. Always read the label before using.
- Get rid of clutter in storage areas, where insects, snakes, and spiders might live.
- Protect pets by using flea collars, tick sprays, and flea and tick medication.
- Do not reach into rocky cracks, under logs, or under large rocks. These area might be home to insects, spiders, or snakes.
- Do not touch a snake, even if a snake looks dead. A snake can still bite up to an hour after its death.
- Teach children about the appearance and dangers of the animals listed above.

## Teaching Children about Poisons

When teaching children about poisons, the lesson should be designed to present key messages about poisoning using age appropriate educational interactive methods. The goal is to provide children with the knowledge and skills to:

- Identify poisons
- Prevent poisoning
- Respond appropriately in poisoning emergencies After each lesson, children

should be able to:

- Identify commonly seen poisons (in their environment)
- Describe a poison (as something that should not be touched or tasted.)
- Describe when to take medication
- Identify a person who is responsible for giving you medication
- Explain why plants, flowers, berries, and mushrooms should not be eaten

Information to Include and Questions to ask:

- Discuss safety.
  1. Stay away. - Never touch, smell, or taste something if you are not sure what it is. You should ask an adult first.
  2. Never take medicine by yourself- Always make sure an adult gives you your medicine. If you take too much, take it the wrong way, or take the wrong kind; it could hurt you.
  3. Always tell a grown up right away if you swallow something that you are not supposed to.
  4. Never open locked cabinets- Grown-ups lock things up out of the sight and reach of children in order to keep children safe.
  5. Avoid touching strange plants- Some plants can cause you to itch really badly or give you a rash. Some plants can even make you sick if you eat them.
- Ask what is a poison?
- Ask if the children can provide you with examples of poisons?
- Show children items that may contain poison.
  - Household cleaning products
  - Plants
  - Medicine (explain that directions should be followed)



## For Further Information

Callers can get free, confidential advice from a poison expert 24-hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year by calling the emergency toll-free hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

By calling the national number, callers reach their local poison center where specially trained health care specialists (nurses, pharmacists and doctors) are available to provide help with poison emergencies or provide answers to poison-related questions. The national number works by automatically and immediately identifying the caller's location, and then connects the caller to the closest poison center. All calls are free and confidential.

Additional contact information:

Georgia Poison Center Grady Health System 80 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE P.O. Box 26066 Atlanta, Georgia  
30303-3050 [www.georgiapoisoncenter.org](http://www.georgiapoisoncenter.org)

Education Department- 404-616-9235

## Resources

### Emergency Numbers

Post Near all Phones

**Local Physician or Hospital:** \_\_\_\_\_

**County Health Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ambulance, Police and Fire: 911**

**Regional Poison Control Center: (800) 222-1222**



Georgia Poison Center- <http://www.georgiapoisoncenter.org/>