



## **Children Poisonings; Getting to the Cause**

*By Rebecca Booker*

Poison Prevention Week is March 19-25<sup>th</sup>. Every day in the U.S. Poison Centers answer more than 6,500 emergency calls. More than half of those calls are about children under the age of six.

The challenges of protecting children in our homes are significant. Every day parent, grandparents and caregivers are faced with children who develop new skills, seemingly overnight. We celebrate when children begin to crawl, walk, and climb. But those same developmental milestones coincide with an insatiable curiosity to explore the world. One way that children explore the world is by picking things up and putting them into their mouths. Pills and berries look like candy, liquid cleaning products and automobile fluids look like soft drinks, and wild mushrooms look like dinner.

*Where are the poisons in your home?* The following is a beginning list of where to look for them:

### **Kitchen**

Dishwashing liquid  
Liquid dish soap  
Scouring soap  
Window cleaner  
Oven cleaner  
Medicines  
Vitamins  
Furniture polish  
Drain cleaner/opener  
Ammonia

### **Garage**

Gasoline  
Kerosene  
Car wax/soaps  
Weed killers/pesticides  
Paints  
Windshield washer fluid  
Antifreeze

### **Laundry Room**

Laundry soap  
Bleach  
Fabric softener  
Dyes

### **Closet /Storage**

Rat/ant poisons  
Mothballs and sprays

### **Miscellaneous**

Alcohol  
Broken plaster  
Certain Plants

### **Bathrooms**

Cosmetics  
Shampoo  
Mouthwash  
Medications  
Cleaners  
Lotions  
Perfume

### **Purse**

Medications  
Painkillers  
Cosmetics

51% of children that get poisoned between 3-7 years old are from the improper storage of poisonous substances. The Poison Control Centers of America recommend the following tips for poison proofing your home:

- ❑ Install safety latches on all cupboards containing harmful products. It is not enough to keep them up high.
- ❑ Keep all products in the original container.
- ❑ Never refer to medicine as candy.
- ❑ Clean out old medicines frequently and flush them down the drain.
- ❑ Rinse empty containers and dispose of them properly.
- ❑ Never take or give medicines in the dark.
- ❑ Purchase products with child-resistant caps when possible.
- ❑ Store cleaning supplies out of reach and out of sight of children.
- ❑ Don't store medicines or cleaning agents near food.
- ❑ Keep poison control (1-800-222-1222), your MD, hospital phone numbers readily available and near the phone.
- ❑ When you change the batteries in your smoke alarms with the changing of your clocks, check your children's weights and write it down and display it (poison control needs this important accurate information for calculating antidotes).

If you suspect that someone has been poisoned, call the poison control number (1-800-222-1222). There is one number to call anywhere in the United States, to access help.

Have the following information ready:

- ❑ Age and weight of the patient.
- ❑ Your name and phone number.
- ❑ The name of the product and the ingredients.
- ❑ Amount of the poison involved.
- ❑ The time the poisoning occurred.
- ❑ Any symptoms present in the victim.

*Remember- poisonings are a predictable and preventable!*