

OREGON POISON CENTER

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Poison Prevention in the Golden Years

What is a poison?

A poison is anything someone eats, breaths, gets in the eyes or on the skin that can cause a rash, sickness or potential death. Some poisons can include medications that are taken in the wrong way. Please review these safety tips. Accidents can happen whether you are prepared or not.

What should I do to prevent poisoning for myself and others?

- ✓ Use medicine reminders. Use a medication diary or calendar to keep track of your dosing schedules. Hang the calendar in the area where the medicine is taken, and mark it every time a dose is taken. Accurate records will remind you of your last dose. This will make it easier for your health care provider to evaluate your treatment.
- ✓ Make a list of medications you are taking now. Include the dose, how often you take it, the imprint code on each tablet or capsule and the name of your pharmacy. The number and code written on your tablet can help you to identify a drug when you need refills.
- ✓ Update your list. Anytime your medication changes, change your list too.
- ✓ If you skip a dose, do not take an extra dose without talking with your doctor or pharmacist.
- ✓ Read the label on every bottle carefully each time you take the medication. Follow the directions carefully.
- ✓ Keep your medicine in their original containers. Many pills look a lot alike. By keeping them in their original containers, you will always know which pill is which.
- ✓ Turn the lights on when you take your medication. If you cannot see what you are taking, you might take the wrong pill.
- ✓ Do not crush, chew or break any capsules or tablets unless you are instructed to do so. Some tablets & capsules release the medicine slowly. If you crush or chew them you can get the whole power of the drug all at once.
- ✓ Use the same pharmacy each time. Your pharmacist can help you avoid any potential drug-drug adverse effects.
- ✓ Prescriptions should be used only by the intended person and for a specific purpose.
- ✓ Avoid taking your medicines in front of children. They may try to imitate you when you are not in the room.
- ✓ Pills or medicine **should not** be called “candy.” Children may think it is really candy and help themselves when you are not in the room.

All medicines, even drugs that are over-the-counter, should be kept out of reach of children. Keep them in a locked cabinet. Aspirin, Tylenol and Advil containing drugs are often overlooked as potential poisons.