
Summer Hazards

Fun and frolicking abounds during the summer season. However, it is important to remember that these favored months can bring an increase in the incidence of poisoning accidents for our children and loved ones. The staff of the Oregon Poison Center would like you to take extra precautions to protect your family from common summer hazards.

Decreased supervision of children:

With warm weather, children play outdoors more, making supervision difficult. Children are often poisoned when there is a change in household routine, such as a weekend outing, family vacation or visitors in your home. Extra care should be taken when leaving medications in your suitcases, purses and cars! Please remember:

- Keep all medicines in their original, labeled containers.
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children.

Pesticides, insect repellants, and flea bombs

Pesticides and insecticides are often used to improve our enjoyment of the out of doors, as well as indoor living. Remember all pesticides are poisonous and can have serious effects on people, pets and wildlife.

- Use insect repellants that are safe for your children. Consult your physician and pharmacist.
- Supervise your children when applying insect repellants.
- Use proper safety methods when storing, applying or disposing of pesticides and their containers.
- Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 for any pesticide exposure.

The EPA has more information on safe pesticide use in the home and garden, including insect repellents/DEET, using preserved wood in the garden and playground, and using foggers, and more at their website: http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/alpha_fs.htm

Plants and Mushrooms

Many outdoor and indoor plants can be poisonous. Summer flowers and wild berries are especially attractive to children and can make them sick.

- Know the names of your plants before your child eats one.
The poison center is unable to identify plants over the telephone. Plant nurseries, greenhouses and garden shops can help identify plants. Labeling flowerpots and tagging outdoor plants can help the child's babysitter when you aren't home.
- All yard mushrooms are considered poisonous unless positively identified otherwise by a trained mycologist (mushroom expert).
- Plants such as poison oak and ivy can cause skin rash. Wear protective clothing—long sleeves, long pants while walking through the woods and brush. If an exposure occurs, wash any exposed skin as soon as possible. This includes dog's fur, which can spread the sap to your arms and legs.
- Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 for any plant exposure. With the name of the plant proper treatment recommendations can be provided to protect you and your family from the negative effects of a poison exposure.

Animal bites/rabies

Animal bites can occur during playtime with pets or due to aggressive behavior by any animal. Such a bite can cause infection and scarring of the skin. When any skin surface is broken open,

- Wash thoroughly with soap and water, and consult your physician.
- Make sure your tetanus immunization is current.
- Your physician and local health department can answer questions about the risk of rabies.

Snakebites

When it comes to snakebite safety, prevention is the best cure.

- Wear long pants and sleeves, and avoid areas where snakes live—rocks and bushy areas.

If someone has been bitten by a poisonous snake,

- Keep the person as quiet as possible, and
- Call 911 for an ambulance to transport them to health care immediately.
- Call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 for any snakebite.

Insect bites and stings

Many stinging and biting insects are attracted to different colors and smells. Protect yourself from bites and stings by

- Avoiding scented perfumes, lotions, and cosmetics.
- Avoiding brightly colored and patterned clothing.
- Avoiding going barefoot, especially through vegetation. Examine wet towels and washcloths before handling. Be careful when cooking, eating and drinking outdoors

If anyone is bitten or stung, the body's normal response is to alert their immune system. Mild to extreme allergic reactions can occur. Signs of an allergic reaction can include

- Rapid swelling of the bitten area;
- Swelling of the face and neck;
- Hives or a bumpy rash spreading over the body, as well as;
- Wheezing and difficulty breathing.

Call 911 if anyone is having trouble breathing. With other signs of allergic reaction, consult your physician immediately.

Ticks can cause a rash, muscle aches, headache and fever that can develop days after being bit. Consult your physician for any of these symptoms.

- Contact the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 for any insect bite or sting exposure.

Sunburn/heat stroke

Too much sun and heat can be life threatening. Protect yourself by

- Wearing long sleeves, pants, and a hat in the sun.
- Drinking plenty of fluids, such as water.
- Avoiding over-exertion on hot days.
- Consult your physician for blistering burns, severe headache, cool clammy skin, muscle cramps and dizziness. These are signs of a severe burn or heat/sun stroke.

Food poisoning and food safety questions

Warm weather often brings us together to enjoy picnics and cookouts. Careful preparation and storage of food is essential to prevent food poisoning. Symptoms of food poisoning can include

- Nausea & vomiting,
- Stomach cramps, and
- Diarrhea.

Consult your physician or poison center if you think you have food poisoning.

Review the information on the following website for more information:

Website: www.foodsafety.gov

Have a safe summer, and remember to call your regional poison center at

1-800-222-1222 --- 24 hours a day --- 7 days a week

We are here to help when you have a question about poisons or a poisoning emergency.