

What is a poison?

Did you know that almost any substance could be poisonous if the dose or exposure level is high enough? That's right, even substances labelled 'natural' or 'eco-friendly', or those that are good for you in small doses, can be as dangerous as other poisons.

Who's at risk?

While we are all at risk of poisoning, children under the age of five are at the highest risk and about half of the calls to the Poisons Information Centre are about children. Poisoning can occur due to swallowing a substance, breathing it in, or being splashed on the skin or in the eyes.

REMEMBER Children have a higher risk of poisoning than adults because they can't read or understand warning labels, and they weigh less, so a smaller dose will be more dangerous.

Common household poisons

Medicines (for people and animals), supplements and remedies – Paracetamol, ibuprofen, iron tablets, contraceptive pills, anti-depressants, cough and cold medicines, chest rubs and vaporiser fluids.

Personal hygiene products and cosmetics – Hand sanitiser, mouthwash, shampoo, perfume and nail polish remover.

Cleaning products – Dishwashing and laundry liquid, dishwasher powders and tablets, bleach, oven cleaner, eucalyptus oil and shower cleaner.

Paint and solvents – Methylated spirits and turpentine.

Pesticides – Flea collars, fly spray, animal worming tablets, insecticides, herbicides, mothballs and snail, rodent and cockroach baits.

Garden and auto products – Fertiliser, petrol, diesel, oil and radiator fluid.

Poisonous plants, insects and reptiles.

Toys and other items – Button batteries, glow sticks and bubble-blowing solution.

For more information

**Controlled Substances Licensing
SA Health**

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PO Box 6 Rundle Mall
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Tel: (08) 8226 7100

Fax: (08) 8226 6681

Web: www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

Email: controlled.substances@health.sa.gov.au

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Interpreter



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons



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Prevent Poisoning

in and around your home



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When does poisoning occur?

Children can be clever; give them the chance and they'll find their way into any 'child resistant' package. That's why most poisonings occur when poisons are not stored safely (at home or when taking them home from the shop) or when your family routine changes (such as when you're on holidays or when you have visitors).

REMEMBER 'Child-resistant' does not mean 'child-proof'.

Want to keep poisons away from children?

Check around your home to see what medicines and poisons you have, and how they're stored.



How to prevent poisoning

Make your home safer and prevent nasty accidents with these poisoning prevention tips:

- Always **read** the label and **follow** all instructions, directions, warnings and safety precautions.
- Keep medicines and poisons in their **original containers** and store in **locked** cupboards and on shelves that are at least 1.5 metres from the floor.
- Don't store or use poisons **near food**.
- Return medicines and poisons to their safe storage area as soon **as you have finished using them**.
- **Never leave medicines and poisons unattended** while children are at your home.
- Store poisons that need refrigeration (e.g. some medicines) in a small and **lockable container**.
- **Don't** refer to medicines as 'lollies'.
- Keep children, pets and toys **away** from the area where you are using poisons. Children often copy what they see others doing.
- Only prepare the **amount** of poison you need for the job.
- Have **adequate ventilation** when using oven cleaners, bleach and shower cleaners.
- Make sure all pest baits (including mothballs) are enclosed in tamper-resistant stations. Place them **out of sight and reach** of children and pets.
- Store poisons away from ignition sources, areas prone to flooding or water damage, and other poisons that may be incompatible (e.g. flammable and caustic liquids).

✓ TOP TIP

Do you definitely need all of the poisons you are keeping around your home? If not, dispose of them safely. Is there a safer alternative to the poison you are currently using? If so, substitute for safer products wherever possible, but remember that 'natural' or 'eco-friendly' products can be poisons too.

Getting help quickly

If you suspect that poisoning has occurred, help is never far away:

1. Phone **000 for an ambulance in an emergency** – if a victim has collapsed, stopped breathing, is having a fit or having an anaphylactic reaction*.
2. Phone the **Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26** for first aid advice if poisoning, bites or stings occur*.

*Have information ready for the emergency responder or Poisons Information Centre, like the medicine or poison label/container, and the victim's name and age.

3. Follow the instructions on the label in case of poisoning.

REMEMBER Don't induce vomiting or give the victim anything to drink (e.g. Syrup of Ipecac) unless advised by the Poisons Information Centre or other medical professional.

✓ TOP TIP

Make the Poisons Information Centre phone number (13 11 26) clearly visible on your home phone and store it in your mobile phone.



Safe poison disposal

To find out how to safely dispose of poisons:

- Check the label on the container.
- Unused medicines should be returned to your pharmacist.
- Contact Zero Waste SA on (08) 8204 2051 or visit: <http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/at-home/hazardous-waste>
- Contact your local council.
- Visit the ChemClear or drumMUSTER websites for information on disposing of farm chemicals and containers.