



You Better Watch Out - So You Don't Have to Pout

The holiday season is a wonderful and exciting time of the year but it can also be a dangerous time. Research shows that the number of poisoning incidents involving children rises during the holiday season. During the hustle and bustle of the holidays it is easy to overlook items in the home that could cause a poisoning. The Nebraska Poison Center would like to offer a few tips on how to make this **“the most wonderful time of the year.”**

- Visiting relatives may bring their medications. Over 50% of the calls to the Poison Center involve medications. **NEVER** leave medications on a nightstand – make sure to store them up and out of reach.
- Disc batteries may be found in games, watches, remotes and musical greeting cards. If swallowed they can become lodged and cause serious injury or death if not removed. **In 2014, poison centers were consulted on nearly 94,000 cases of foreign body and/or disc battery ingestion.**
- Alcohol is found in holiday drinks and in gifts such as perfume and cologne. It is important to clean up immediately following all holiday parties. Remove all items that may contain alcohol and keep out of reach of small children. **Last year, poison centers managed approximately 11,000 cases of alcohol exposure in children under six years of age.** Remember to empty all ashtrays and keep e-cigarette devices and refills out of reach of children – it only takes a small amount to send a child to the hospital.
- Lamp oil in candle lamps is frequently used this time of year. These fuels look like pretty beverages to small children but can cause serious consequences if swallowed. Aroma and fragrance oils commonly used during holidays smell good and attract small children, but can cause vomiting and seizures in large amounts.
- Keep small children and animals away from seasonal plants such as mistletoe, holly berries, yew plants and poinsettias. Poinsettias are not toxic but in large amounts may cause an upset stomach.
- Be mindful of icicles or tinsel as both can be a choking hazard if swallowed. Snow sprays help with holiday décor, but the pressurized container may cause eye damage if sprayed directly in the eye. Older tree ornaments may contain lead paint – be sure to keep these out of reach of small children. **Last year, poison centers managed roughly 6,500 cases involving toys and ornaments.**

Prevention is the best treatment for poisonings. The Nebraska Poison Center offers tips on holiday safety and poison prevention as a free community service to the public. If you have questions, contact the Nebraska Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.