

# Wisconsin Poison Center

## Poison Prevention Program

### Grades 3 - 5

#### I Introduction

- a. Read the objectives.
- b. Explain that majority of poisonings reported to Wisconsin Poison Center are for children younger than 6 years old.
  - Children are curious and they explore their world using their sense of taste, smell and touch.
  - Most children cannot read product labels and they often drink, eat or spray something that can harm them.
  - Children in grades 3 and 4 are learning to be more responsible and they can help their younger siblings, and friends stay safe around poisons.
  - Most children think that poisons smell and taste bad. You will learn that this is not true.
  - Most children think that a poison is something that they would NOT recognize. You will learn that this is not true.

#### II Poison Information

- a. Tell the children what a poison is:
  1. A poison is something that makes you sick or hurts you if you eat, drink, touch or smell it. Poisons can damage the body's organs and tissues.
  2. Ways that poisons get in your body:
    - Mouth or swallowing a poison.
    - Nose or breathing a poison.
    - Eyes or getting a poison in the eyes.
    - Skin or getting a poison on the skin, or a bite or sting from an insect or animal.
  3. Explain that poisons are everywhere in their home and outside, too. For example, poisons are found in the bathroom (shampoo, medicines), the bedroom (makeup, perfume), in the kitchen (soap, cleaning products), in the backyard (plants, berries, mushrooms), in the garage (gas, weed killers), in purses (medicines, cigarettes) and in diaper bags (medicines, diaper rash cream).
  4. Explain that poisons *may* look and smell pretty, although most children think poisons look bad and taste bad.
    - Perfumes smell good and often look pretty, but they should not be tasted, or squirted in the eyes.
    - Some medicines may taste good, but taking too much medicine can make you *very* sick.
    - Some poisons may look like things that are safe to eat. (Show a bottle of a pine cleaner and apple juice, or see other examples of poison look alikes on the enclosed sheet). Emphasize that children should ask a trusted adult before they eat, drink, taste, touch or smell anything!

5. Explain the four forms of poisons.
  - Solids-like powder, granules, pills, plants.
  - Liquids-clear like water, colored like juice, some are “runny” (like mouthwash) and some are “thick” (like dish soap).
  - Sprays-aerosol, pump or trigger sprayers.
  - Invisibles-smoke, carbon monoxide, fumes (like car exhaust).
  
- b. Discuss medication safety
  1. Amount: When a doctor gives you medicine, the doctor wants you to get better. The doctor gives you the right amount of medicine. If you take that amount, you will get better. But if you take more medicine than the doctor tells you, it can make you very sick.
  2. Kind: The doctor gives the right kind of medicine to children. Taking someone else’s medication or an adult medication can make you sick.
  3. ALWAYS have a trusted adult help you take medicine. Never take someone else’s medication. Only take as much medicine as a trusted adult gives you.
  
- c. The Poison Center
  1. The place to call if someone has been poisoned or someone has a question about poisons.
  2. Calls are answered 24 hours a day, every day of the year.
  3. National number, toll free 1-800-222-1222. The number will reach the caller’s nearest poison center.
  4. Here in Wisconsin the Wisconsin Poison Center is a program of Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin, but we help people of any age.
  5. Calls are confidential or “private.”
  
- d. Mr. Yuk
  1. Mean, green face on stickers (show Mr. Yuk stickers)
    - Mr. Yuk means “No” or “Poison Stay Away.”
    - With an adult at home, put Mr. Yuk stickers on things around the house that could make a child sick.
    - With an adult’s permission, place a Mr. Yuk sticker on or near the phone, in case of an emergency.
  
- e. Statistics
  1. Most common substances involved in poisonings in young children
    - Personal care products/Cosmetics (shampoo, soaps).
    - Household cleaning products (dish detergents, glass cleaner, floor cleaner).
    - Over the counter pain and fever medicines (those containing acetaminophen, the active ingredient in Tylenol).
    - Multivitamins.
    - Pesticides.
  2. The poison center is able to help most people **without** needing to send them to the hospital or their doctor.
  
- f. Poison Prevention and Safety Ideas:

1. Always lock up potential poisons and medicines up high and out of the reach of children.
  2. Place the poison center number near/on the phone.
  3. Place Mr. Yuk stickers on potential poisons around the home. Make sure to do this with a trusted adult and any children in the home. Emphasize that Mr. Yuk means “No” or “Poison Stay Away!”
  4. Never call medicine “candy” and never take medicine in front of young children. Children like to imitate adults.
  5. Do not store poisons near food or in food or beverage containers.
  6. The person using any product should keep the product with them at all times, or put it away and out of the reach of children.
- g. What to do if a poisoning is suspected?
1. Remain calm.
  2. If the person is not breathing or has lost consciousness, call 9-1-1.
  3. Call the poison center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222. They will help you.

### III Learning Activity Ideas

- a. Play the “100 Grand Game”  
This is a question and answer game that discusses poisons, potential poisons, routes of poisoning and first aid for poisoning.  
The answer key highlights the correct answer and gives the teacher notes, explaining the answers. A copy of this game can be downloaded at our Web site at [www.wisconsinpoison.org](http://www.wisconsinpoison.org).
- b. Scavenger Hunt/ Poison Patrol
1. Instruct the students to make a list of things around their homes that they think are poisons.
    - Give them a list of areas to think about: bathroom, bedroom, kitchen, laundry, basement, garage/shed and outside.
    - Next the students are to take the list home and be a detective. Students should locate poisons on their list and add other poisons to their list.
    - Encourage students to do this activity with an adult in their home and with younger siblings and have the students apply Mr. Yuk stickers to the products they discover.
    - Continue the class discussion with the students’ updated lists.
  2. Another idea: students put names of found poisons on index cards or sticky notes.
    - In the classroom post a large diagram of a house and have students put their index card/sticky note in the room on the diagram where they located the poison.  
  
REMINDE students that poisons can hurt someone if they are swallowed, get on the skin, in the eyes, or breathed in.
- c. Practice emergency telephone skills
1. Review when to call 9-1-1 (loss of consciousness, not breathing, seizing).

2. Review the importance of calling 1-800-222-1222; the poison help number if someone is poisoned or they think someone has been poisoned. Students role play a poison emergency telephone call using a play phone.
  - Remind the students that the poison center will ask for the exact product name as it appears on the label, the name, age and sometimes the weight of the patient, the caller's phone number and zip code, if the patient (person exposed) has any symptoms or medical problems.
  - Remind the students that the poison center is there to help them and they should remain calm.
3. Students make a list of emergency numbers for their home. Include parent work phone numbers, a trusted neighbor, 911 and the poison center number (a sample is enclosed).

d. Reading Labels for Safety

1. Students need to learn to **always read a label first**, before using a product or medication.
2. When reading labels, students should look for these words:

Caution	Warning
Danger	Toxic
Poison	Fatal
Flammable	Harmful

3. Students bring in an empty/rinsed container(s) or a photocopy of a label with one or more of these words listed on the label.
  - Discuss how the product should be used.
  - Discuss how someone might misuse the product and be poisoned.

*Remind students: never mix household products together or breathe in any household product.*

e. Poison Mobile

1. Materials needed:
  - Old magazines
  - Glue and scissors
  - Cardboard
  - Construction paper/scrap
  - 3 soda straws
  - String or yarn or thread
2. Instructions for constructing the mobile:
  - Students cut out 6 pictures of poisons from magazines. Glue pictures to construction paper. Trim.
  - Cut a triangular shape from a piece of cardboard. Cut a small slit in each corner of the triangle, and punch a hole in its center.
  - Attach short threads/string to the poison pictures. (Do this by punching holes in the pictures and tying the thread, or by taping the threads to the pictures)

- Cut slits in the ends of the straws. Attach two pictures to each straw, one on each end.
- Cut 4 pieces of threads/string, each 2 feet long. Grasp the threads at one end and tie a knot in them as a group, about 6 inches from the end.
- Insert one thread in the center hole of the cardboard triangle. Insert each of the remaining 3 threads in each of the corner slits (one thread for each corner)
- Attach corner threads to the middle/balancing point of the straws.
- Attach a Mr. Yuk sticker to the thread that runs through the center hole.
- Display the mobile.

#### **IV Evaluation**

At the end of the activity each student should be able to state:

1. What a poison is.
2. The four routes of poisoning.
3. Where a poison could be found in or around the home.
4. Three poison safety/prevention measures.
5. The appropriate action if a poisoning occurs.
6. Two common warning words on product labels.