

POISON PREVENTION

Winter 2010

The Plant Corner

For more poison
prevention information,
brochures and
activities visit

wisconsinpoison.org

**POISON
Help** 
1-800-222-1222

Make the holiday season safe

The holidays can be a happy time for children and adults. But, decorations, entertaining and other festivities often can distract parents from taking proper safety precautions. Be alert to potential poisons and take steps to keep you and your family safe.

Alcohol

Alcohol of all types, including liquor, wine, beer, perfumes, colognes and aftershaves are poisonous. Keep perfumes and colognes in places where kids can't get to them. After the party is over, be sure to empty all drink glasses so your child doesn't sample any adult drinks. Small children do not digest alcohol the same as adults. Seizures have been reported.

Decorations

Be mindful of "icicles" or tinsel. They can be a choking hazard. Angel hair is finely spun glass, which can cause cuts or irritations when handled or swallowed.



Ornaments and toys

The prettiest old ornaments might have hidden hazards. Beware of cuts from broken glass and be aware that some older ornaments may be decorated with harmful lead paints. Make sure small button batteries are not available to children. One swallowed battery can make a child very sick.

Candles

Oil candles and lamp oils can cause serious injuries when swallowed. Call the Wisconsin Poison Center immediately if a child ingests any amount of these products. Wax holiday candles, when lit, are more of a fire hazard than a poison risk. Also, melted wax can cause serious burns.



Food

Remove food from the table as soon as guests have eaten. Put leftovers in small containers in the refrigerator to cool rapidly. Although food poisoning is hard to diagnose without doing a test, symptoms include nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Medications

Often guests stay overnight during the holidays. These guests may not be used to having small children around and may leave medications within a child's reach. Heart and diabetic pills may be swallowed without any obvious outward symptoms. If you suspect a child may have swallowed any medicine, call the Poison Center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

Tobacco

Empty ash trays often. When the party is over, clean them. Eating as few as six cigarette butts can send a child to the hospital.

The Plant Corner

Certain holiday plants are poisonous. Below is a list of plants to keep out of children's reach.

Holly

The plant's bright red berries look pretty to little kids. Call the Wisconsin Poison Center if your child swallows any of these berries.

Jerusalem Cherry

The fruit from this plant closely resembles a cherry tomato. If any part of this plant is eaten, call the Poison Center.

Mistletoe

Mistletoe – especially its berries – can be poisonous. If anyone in your family eats real mistletoe, call the Poison Center immediately.

Poinsettia

The poinsettia is not a highly poisonous plant; however, eating the leaves may cause choking, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. It also may cause mouth irritation. The plant's sap may cause slight irritation to the skin.

Christmas trees

Most trees are varieties of pine or spruce and are not toxic if a child chews the needles. Sharp needles, though, may cause irritation and even bleeding. Allergic skin reactions to various species also are common.

Artificial trees

Most fake trees are made of plastic or aluminum and are not poisonous if swallowed. However, they can be a choking hazard.



We want your feedback! How are we doing? Does *Poison Prevention* give you information you need? What would you like to see us include? E-mail your comments with *Poison Prevention* in the subject line to Cathy Smith, Poison Center manager, at csmith@chw.org.

