

Published by CARE's WorkLife Solutions to help employees with life management issues.

Poison Prevention Tips To Keep Your Family Safe

Kids are back in school. Cold and flu season is upon us. Holidays are just around the corner. Here are some tips to help you prevent poisonings during this busy time of year.

Medicines

- ◆ Keep medicines in the containers in which they came both at home and when traveling.
- ◆ Lock up medicines and household products where children can't see or reach them.
- ◆ Use containers that are made to keep children out. Replace caps tightly after using a product.
- ◆ Tell your doctor about all medicines you take including over-the-counter and vitamins.
- ◆ Read and follow directions and warnings before taking medicine each time you use them.
- ◆ Be careful when taking drugs together. Some medicines should not be taken with food, alcohol, or other medicines.
- ◆ Talk to your doctor before taking any food supplements (like vitamins, minerals, or herbs).
- ◆ Never take medicine in the dark as you could easily make a mistake.
- ◆ Safely dispose of medicines that have expired or are no longer needed.
- ◆ Never take other people's prescription drugs. Take only those that are prescribed for you. Never share prescription drugs.
- ◆ Medicine that taste, smell, or look like candy may attract children. Be sure to keep them out of reach and locked up.
- ◆ Children learn by imitating adults and may take medicine as part of their "play."



Mushrooms

- ◆ Only experts can tell poisonous mushrooms from safe mushrooms.
- ◆ Teach children that they should never eat mushroom they find growing outside.
- ◆ Try to eliminate mushrooms from your yard to also keep your pets safe.
- ◆ Poisonous mushrooms, called death caps, often grow in yards and parks.
- ◆ Eating even a few bites of certain mushrooms can cause liver damage that can kill you.



Berries

- ◆ Berries are often found on plants in the fall. Some berries can poison you.
- ◆ Berries may attract small children as they may think these berries are just like the fruits at the food market.
- ◆ Some berries that can harm people do not harm birds and other animals.
- ◆ If you think someone ate one or more berries from a plant, call **Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222** right away.

Source: Department of Health & Human Services, Health Resources & Services Administration. *Seasonal tips: Fall (edited version)* www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov

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Planning Ahead for the Winter Holiday Season

Planning ahead can help alleviate some of the stress that accompanies this very exciting, but busy, time of the year. When you have enough money saved in the bank, giving gifts is a much more enjoyable experience all around. You can concentrate on getting the right gift for that special family member or friend, as opposed to feeling overwhelmed by having to spend money you don't have. Many people buy more than they can afford and the "Ghost of Holiday Past" ends up haunting them every month in the New Year—in the form of a credit card payment.

- ♦ **Develop a budget and stick to it.** Make a gift list and determine how much you want to spend on each person. You should include costs for cards, postage, gift wrapping, holiday meals out, parties, travel, and any other miscellaneous items. Bring your list with you to the stores, as it is easy to shop impulsively during this time of year.
- ♦ **Shorten your gift list.** Is it really necessary to buy everyone on your list a present? Consider sending a thoughtful holiday card or e-mail, or even writing a family newsletter to update everyone about the past year.
- ♦ **Get creative with your gift giving.** Handmade gifts and personalized coupons can be the most thoughtful gifts. Think about your own talents as well as what the person may need. For example, knit a blanket or sweater; bake some cookies; create a photo album of your favorite pictures (decorate the cover of the album with a colorful title); or give them a coupon for a special dinner at your house, babysitting time, or even a house cleaning!
- ♦ **Draw names.** If you belong to a big family or have many friends, suggest this idea so that each person has to buy only one gift.
- ♦ **Shop early and compare prices.** There are great bargains and sales to be found. In the future, when you see a great gift for a family or friend during the year—buy it! Not only do stores offer special promotions and discount prices throughout the year, but this will also save you time during the holidays and help you spread your spending throughout the year. Just don't forget to put your gifts in a safe place so you know where to find them when it's time to give them away!
- ♦ **Shop online or by catalogue.** It's fast, it's easy, and you can comparison shop! In addition, since you'll probably be ordering gifts from the comforts of your home, the temptation to eat out or to make unplanned purchases will be greatly reduced.
- ♦ **Save money.** Continue adding to your holiday fund each week. If your budget is tight, find ways to cut back on your daily spending (e.g., no morning latte, bring a lunch to work, give up your weekly movie, etc.), and put that extra cash toward gifts.
- ♦ **Pay off your credit card.** If you are planning to shop with a credit card, make sure you have enough in your bank account to pay off the amount at the end of the month. Also, consider using cards that offer extra incentives such as frequent flyer miles.
- ♦ **Donate more than cash.** Contact your favorite local charity and see if they take donations in other forms than just cash (e.g., canned goods, clothing, furniture, books, etc.).

Source: Choose to Save & The American Savings Education Council. *Planning ahead for the winter holiday season.* www.choosetosave.org

Top 10 Checklist for Playground Safety

1. Surfaces around playground equipment should be filled with at least 12 inches of loose fill, such as wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel.
2. Most stationary equipment should have at least a 6-foot use zone in all directions.
3. Any openings that can trap children (in guardrails or between ladder rungs) should be less than 3.5 inches apart or more than 9 inches.
4. Guardrails should surround all elevated platforms and should be at least 29—38 inches high.
5. Eliminate exposed concrete footings, tree roots or rocks that could trip children.
6. Check for sharp edges and dangerous hardware, like protruding bolts.
7. Make sure your child plays on age-appropriate equipment.
8. Playgrounds should be maintained regularly. Report any problems.
9. Remove hoods or drawstrings that can get caught on equipment.
10. Supervise children while they play.



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