



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Knox County Health Department

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MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Is Your Home Poisoning Your Child?

Knox County, IL- As the temperature begins to rise and the snow melts, families will begin their annual spring-cleaning. After the dusting and scrubbing is done, make sure your clean house is a safe house. Many things in our house can be considered poisons. Cleaning products can be lethal if swallowed or inhaled. Plants, including geraniums and daisies, can be toxic if ingested and can cause skin allergies. Lead found in cracking or peeling paint can cause brain damage in children if lead dust is inhaled or ingested. Even common medicines like pain relievers can be toxic if used incorrectly.

Each year, more than 90% of the poisonings reported to the Illinois Poison Center occurred in the home. Children are especially susceptible to household poisons. Children are more susceptible to household poisons because of their curiosity of the world around them. Medicine may look like candy, cleaning fluids kept in bright bottle may look like soda or juice, and flaking lead-based paint has a sweet taste much like candy.

Keeping your family safe from poisons takes a little time, but can save lives.

- Provide healthy snacks between meals - children with empty stomachs absorb more lead than children with food in their stomachs
- Making sure children wash their hands after playing with toys and before eating or sleeping – this helps remove lead dust
- Cleaning toys and areas such as baseboards and windowsills, where lead dust may build up, at least once a week with a damp cloth, will keep dust to a minimum
- Encourage children to play in mulched or grassy areas instead of dirt will help prevent exposure to lead in soil
- Always return medication/pesticides/cleaning products to a locked, safe storage area immediately after use.
- Never call medicine candy.
- Store all medications and cleaning products in their original labeled, child-resistant containers.
- Do not store cleaning products and food in the same cabinet.
- Include the Poison Center phone number (1-800-222-1222) in the essential emergency phone list in the child's home, daycare center or relative's home.

Everyone is at risk for some kind of poisoning, no matter what their age. Stay safe by being aware of what you are putting in and on your body. Lead poisoning testing can be done at the Knox County Health Department for \$30 or ask your family doctor at your child's next check up. For more information regarding poisoning contact the Knox County Health Department at (309) 344 – 2224 or visit www.knoxcountyhealth.org.