



# Minnesota Poison Control System

[www.mnpoison.org](http://www.mnpoison.org)

## Lesson 1: Poison Prevention Awareness (Adults)

### Discussion:

- Today we will discuss life-saving poison information, but first I have a question... Who do you think have more poison exposures- adults or children? (Allow answers)
- Most people think of children when they think of poisoning. Children do have many more exposures than adults. However, adults suffer more serious injuries and deaths from poisonings than children.

Every year in the U.S., over **2 million** unintentional poisonings are reported to the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC).

- **Children age 5 and under** were involved in over **40%** of reported poisonings last year.
- **Adults over age 20** were also involved in **over 40%** of reported poisonings last year and **over 90%** of the human fatalities reported to the AAPCC occurred in this age group.

The most common substances involved in poisonings reported to the Poison Center include:

- ♦ Analgesics (pain reliever)
- ♦ Household Cleaning Substances
- ♦ Cosmetics/Personal Care Products
- ♦ Sedative/Hypnotics/Antipsychotics
- ♦ Antihistamines
- ♦ Cardiovascular Drugs
- ♦ Antidepressants
- ♦ Pesticides
- ♦ Foreign Bodies/Toys/Miscellaneous

The most common route of poison exposure is by mouth (swallowed poison).

### **What are some things at home that can be a poison?**

- ♦ Prescription and non-prescription medicines (including iron pills and pain relievers)
- ♦ Cleaning products that can cause burns (drain opener, toilet bowl cleaner, oven cleaner, rust remover)
- ♦ Auto fluids (antifreeze, windshield washer solution, gasoline)
- ♦ Carbon monoxide gas (from leaky furnaces and chimneys, gas stoves and water heaters, generators and space heaters used indoors)
- ♦ Hydrocarbons (furniture polish, lighter fluid, lamp oil, paint thinner, kerosene, turpentine)
- ♦ Pesticides (weed killers, ant and roach killers, garden chemicals)
- ♦ Wild mushrooms



# Minnesota Poison Control System

[www.mnpoison.org](http://www.mnpoison.org)

## Lesson 1 (continued):

### **What is a poison?**

Any substance that can cause harm or even death if it is swallowed, inhaled, or splashed on the skin or in the eyes.

Poisons are found everywhere, and many everyday things such as medicines and cleaning products can be poisonous if they are used in the wrong way or in large amounts. Many people do not realize that common products around the home can be poisonous. Let's say you're cleaning your bathtub with a household cleaner and the product is not cleaning the way you expected; so, you add some bleach. Suddenly, you're coughing and your throat starts to burn ... What would you do? (Allow answers)

If you are ever faced with this or other poisoning emergency, there are some very important steps you should take:

#### **For Swallowed Poisons:**

- Call the Poison Center immediately.

#### **For Inhaled Poisons:**

- Get the victim to fresh air immediately.
- Call the Poison Center.

#### **For Poisons on the Skin:**

- Remove contaminated clothing.
- Rinse the victim's skin with water for 20 minutes.
- Call the Poison Center.

#### **For Poisons in the Eye:**

- Flush the victim's eye with lukewarm water for about 20 minutes.
- Call the Poison Center.

- Remember that help is just a phone call away. The important thing to remember is the toll free number... 1-800-222-1222
- The Minnesota Poison Control System is an emergency telephone service as well as an information center. Here is a brief summary of services that they provide:
  - ◆ Poison emergency telephone service
  - ◆ Professional education
  - ◆ Public education
  - ◆ Research and data collection



# Minnesota Poison Control System

[www.mnpoison.org](http://www.mnpoison.org)

## Lesson 1 (continued):

- **When should you call the Poison Center?** (Allow answers)
  - ◆ If there's been a poisoning
  - ◆ If you're concerned about a possible poisoning
  - ◆ To ask a poison prevention question
  - ◆ To ask for poison prevention materials

*Most poisonings can be treated right over the phone.*

**When you call the Poison Center for an emergency, you will be asked to give the following:**

- ◆ Your name, phone number, and zip code
  - ◆ The victim's name, age, and weight
  - ◆ The name of the substance or poison
  - ◆ The amount of the substance or poison
  - ◆ The time the poisoning took place
  - ◆ Any symptoms the victim has
  - ◆ Any current health problems the victim has
  - ◆ Any medicines the victim is taking
  - ◆ If possible, take the poison or the container to the phone with you. You may be asked to describe the poison or give information from any labels on the container.
- **You must call 911 first ...**
    - ◆ If someone collapses
    - ◆ If someone isn't breathing
    - ◆ If someone is having seizures
    - ◆ If someone won't wake up
- **There are several risk factors associated with unintentional poisoning. These include:**
    - ◆ Lack of supervision - Children left alone, even for a few moments, are at greatest risk of poisoning.
    - ◆ Improper storage - Potential poisons that are left within the reach of children increase their risk of poisoning. Be aware that household products and medicines that are stored in child-resistant packaging are not child proof! Children may be able to open these containers.
    - ◆ Children's curious nature - Children are curious and they like to explore. Sometimes they taste and inhale unsafe products or even get unsafe products on their skin or in their eyes.
    - ◆ Children's desire to mimic adult behavior - Children often mimic the behavior of adults. For example, children might take a medicine because they saw an adult take it.
    - ◆ Failing to read and follow directions - Failure to read and follow directions on product labels is a common reason adults get poisoned.



# Minnesota Poison Control System

[www.mnpoison.org](http://www.mnpoison.org)

## Lesson 1 (continued):

- **Poison Centers would rather prevent poisonings than treat them. Here are some poison prevention tips.**
  - ◆ Lock up medicines, vitamins, household cleaners, lawn care products, auto products, and cosmetics where children cannot see or reach them.
  - ◆ Read labels and follow the directions before taking or giving medicines.
  - ◆ Read labels and follow the directions on household products. Do not mix products!
  - ◆ Store products in their original containers and do not re-use empty containers.
  - ◆ Tell your doctor about any medications including vitamins and herbal supplements that you are taking.
  - ◆ Never give or take extra medicine if some get spilled; call your doctor or pharmacist first.
  - ◆ Never take medicine that belongs to someone else.
  - ◆ Do not use a kitchen spoon to take medicines, use a correct medicine spoon.
  - ◆ Request medications and household products in child-resistant containers, if they are not already in one.
  - ◆ Do not eat wild plants or mushrooms.
- **Despite our best efforts, sometimes poisonings can happen. Here's how to prepare yourselves in case of an emergency.**
  - ◆ Post the number of the Minnesota Poison Control System on all telephones.
  - ◆ Program the number into all telephones.
  - ◆ Let family members, babysitters, and caregivers know where to find the number.

**Ask for Questions:**

***(Answer any questions that you can, and refer others to the Poison Center)***

**Recap:**

**(Ask the audience the following questions to make sure the objectives are met).**

1. What is a poison?
2. What are some common poisons?
3. What are some ways to prevent poisonings?
4. What do you do if a poisoning happens?

**Ask the audience to repeat the phone number to the Poison Center**

***(1-800-222-1222)***