



Minnesota Poison Control System

www.mnpoison.org

Lesson 2: What is a Poison? (3rd-5th Grade)

Discussion:

Today we are going to learn about things that can be a poison and where they are found. *(For this discussion you will need pictures of the following items):*

household cleaners	bleach	ammonia	motor oil
nail polish remover	medicines	poison ivy	mushroom
vitamins	mouthwash	perfume	bug spray
rubbing alcohol			

Question: What is a poison? *(Ask children to define what they think a poison is)*

- A) A poison is something that can make you sick, hurt you or even kill you if you eat or drink it, smell it, splash it in your eyes or on your skin.

Explain to children that poisonous things can be safe if they are used in the right way. *(Show children each picture of the items from list above while explaining). Examples:*

- ◆ Perfume/cosmetics – Can make you smell/look good but can be a poison if you drink or eat it or gets it in your eye
- ◆ Medicine – Helps you to feel better when you are sick but can be a poison if you take too much, take the wrong kind, or take it the wrong way. Never take medicine by yourselves - a grown-up must always give you your medicine.
- ◆ Household cleaner – Helps to keep your homes free from germs but can be a poison if you drink or eat it, or splash it in the eye or on the skin.
- ◆ Some plants – Can be used as food (example: mushrooms) but can be a poison if you eat the wrong kind.

Question: Where can poisons be found? *(Ask children for ideas of rooms in the home and areas outside the home where poisons can be found and what poisons might be found in that area; explain that the labels often have “caution” words: warning, danger, poison, etc.)*

- ◆ Bedroom: perfumes, make-up, plants, medicines
- ◆ Kitchen: plants, cleaning products, medicines, vitamins
- ◆ Bathroom: cleaning products, medicines, make-up
- ◆ Closet: bug/insect sprays
- ◆ Laundry room: laundry detergent, bleach
- ◆ Attic: Mothballs (explain what this is), air fresheners
- ◆ Yard: berries, mushrooms, weed killers, insect/animal (stings & bites)
- ◆ Garage: paint, fluids for car, lawn care products, pool cleaners



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Lesson 2 (continued):

Question: How do poisons enter the body?

A) Mouth – If you taste or swallow it

Eye – if you splash it in

Nose – if you smell it (breathed into the lungs)

Skin – if you touch it or splash it on or by insect/animal bites

- ♦ Teach children - never taste, touch or smell anything that could be a poison.
- ♦ Teach children - always ask a grown-up first if they are not sure what something is.
- ♦ Teach children - poisons should be stored in a locked cabinet out of reach and sight of children. Never try to open locked cabinets; adults lock up poisons to keep you safe.

Finally, if you or someone you know should ever get poisoned, the Minnesota Poison Control System is always ready to help you. They are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. You can call them at 1-800-222-1222!

******Note: If a person is non-responsive, has difficulty breathing, is not breathing, or is having seizures call 9-1-1 immediately******

(If time permits, end the lesson with an activity from the Activity Sheets section)