

Faculty and Employee Assistance Program Newsletter

Back to School Safety: Avoid Common Poison Mistakes



Our FEAP September newsletter is provided by Kristin Wenger, Education Coordinator at the Blue Ridge Poison Center. We hope that you take a moment to consider ways to use this information to protect yourself and your family.

Parents, beware: the start of the school year means a shift in morning routines for your entire household. Changes in schedules and getting kids to school on time create opportunities for poison mistakes. Learn to avoid these all-too-common accidents:

Medicine Mix-up:

It is easy to take the wrong medicine...or the wrong amount... when you are not paying attention. Here are some examples of real calls to the Blue Ridge Poison Center:

- A mother placed her 8 year old son's prescription medication next to his glass of milk at the breakfast table. She turned her back for just a second, and her 2 year old daughter put the pill in her mouth.
- A father reaches for his bottle of vitamins, becomes distracted, and swallows the dog's heartworm medicine by mistake.
- A school nurse receives a frantic call from a mother who has suddenly realized that both she and her husband unknowingly administered their son's medicine before dropping him off at school that morning.

Prevent medicine mix-ups! When a child needs medicine, try keeping a schedule or checklist in a visible place, like on the refrigerator, where adults can mark when they have administered the correct dose. Keep medicine belonging to each member of the household in different places, and always read the label before you give or take any medicine. Be sure you can see the label clearly-- turn on the lights, and put on your glasses if you wear them. It only takes a second to check that you are giving

- the right product
- to the right person
- in the right amount
- at the right time.

Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons:

Little ones will put everything they find into their mouth. And they like to imitate older siblings and adults. When they see you take medicine, put on cologne, or use a cleaning product, they want to handle those items too.

Protect children from harmful substances. Medicines, toiletries, and household products should be kept up high at all times, out of the sight and reach of children. If possible, don't take medicine in front of very young children. Never leave products out in the open when young children are present, not even for a minute. Wait until you are ready to swallow your medicine before removing a pill from its container; don't leave it sitting on a counter or table. If you accidentally drop a pill, stop everything until you find it.

What if the liquid in that glass wasn't juice?

One of the most dangerous things people do is transfer a product out of its original container into something else: a drinking cup or an empty soda bottle, for example. Somebody else may swallow the contents. Many harmful products closely resemble things that are good to eat or drink. Here are some common look-alike examples:

- windshield wiper fluid looks like blue sports drink
- bleach looks like water
- some cleaning products look like apple juice

Prevent look-alike mistakes. Keep all products in their original, labeled containers. Store food in one place, and everything else in another.

Poisoning is preventable. However, in spite of our best efforts, accidents do happen. If you think someone may have been poisoned, call the Blue Ridge Poison Center right away at 1-800-222-1222. Don't wait for symptoms to develop. Health experts are standing by 24-hours a day, every single day, to tell you what to do. Most of the time, a trip to the doctor can be avoided by following the poison center's instructions. Calls are FREE and confidential.

Would you like a free sticker or magnet with the Poison Center's toll free number, so that you can find it quickly in an emergency? Simply call the hotline to request one, or order online: www.brpc.virginia.edu.



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ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

FEAP is available to help with various personal and work concerns. We can be reached at (434) 243-2643 or visit our website at www.uvafeap.com.