

COVID-19 and Poisoning

Staying safe at home during a pandemic



Northern New England
Poison Center
1-800-222-1222

Poisonings in the Home

Most poisonings occur at home. With families spending more time at home because of the COVID-19 pandemic, poisonings are more likely and prevention steps are even more important.

Poison centers nationwide have seen an increase in poisonings of both children and adults at home, especially from cleaning products, as people focus on cleaning and disinfecting their homes. Distractions brought on by the pandemic, such as trying to manage childcare while working from home, may increase the chances of young children getting into possible poisons.

Prevention Basics

Safe use and **safe storage** are key to home safety. That goes for medications, vitamins, supplements, hand sanitizer, cleaners and disinfectants, cosmetics and any other potential poisons.

- Store all potential poisons up high, out of reach of children, in a locked cabinet if possible.
- Store products in their original containers with the top on tight.
- Read the label and carefully follow the instructions each time you use a product.
- Use products only for the reasons listed on the label.
- Put products away as soon as you are finished using them. Put purchases away immediately after returning from the store or pharmacy.
- Know the poison center number. Add **1-800-222-1222** to your phone contacts or order a magnet at www.nnepc.org.

Cleaning Safety

- Remember that washing your hands frequently is the most important cleaning you can do.
- Use one cleaner at a time. Do not mix products unless the label says to. Mixing cleaners can create harmful fumes.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate the area if recommended by the label.
- Do not use bleach, disinfectant wipes or cleaning sprays on skin. They are meant to clean surfaces in your home and may cause skin irritation.
- Do not swallow cleaners or disinfectants. These are not safe to put in your body and will not treat or prevent COVID-19.
- Turn spray bottle nozzles to OFF right after using them.

Medication Safety

- Only use prescription medications that are prescribed to you. Do not share your prescriptions with others.
- Do not take nonmedical products to treat or prevent an illness or medical condition, unless your doctor says to.
- Check the active ingredients on your medications. Avoid taking two medications with the same active ingredient.

Food Safety

- There is currently no evidence the virus is transmitted in food.
- Wash your hands after handling food packaging, before preparing food and before eating.

Resources

Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home
cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html

Four Steps to Food Safety
cdc.gov/foodsafety/keep-food-safe.html

Safely Using Hand Sanitizer
fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/safely-using-hand-sanitizer

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