

Winter Poison Hazards



Winter includes preparation for holiday celebrations, holiday travel and welcoming guests into our homes. Cold and flu season continues. **Poisonings occur with changes in normal routine.** Snow and cold weather requires heating our homes and using toxic antifreeze, windshield washer fluid and ice melt.

Always:

- ✓ Keep household cleaners, antifreeze and windshield washer fluids in original containers.
- ✓ Return cleaners and chemicals to storage area that is out of sight and reach from kids.
- ✓ Check for right medicine, right person, right amount and right time of dose.
- ✓ Return medicine to safe storage (child-resistant caps are not child-proof).
- ✓ Check surroundings for poison hazards when visiting family and friends with kids.
- ✓ Provide guests safe storage away from kids for medicine and personal care items.
- ✓ Empty unfinished alcoholic drinks and ashtrays after guests leave.
- ✓ Store party food leftovers at proper temperatures or discard.

Know that:

- ✓ Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a leading cause of death and illness.
- ✓ CO is odorless and colorless and can only be detected by a CO detector.
- ✓ You can minimize CO poisoning by installing CO detectors and properly maintaining all fuel burning appliances in your home.
- ✓ You can prevent poison injuries with proper storage, supervision and awareness.
- ✓ You can call **1-800-222-1222** anytime and speak to the poison experts at **Rocky Mountain Poison Center** for Poison Help or answers. Your call is always **free** and **confidential**.
- ✓ You can learn more about the above poisons; go to www.rmpdc.org. Click on Public then Poison Prevention Tips to download information. Share with family, friends and community.

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Holiday Poison Prevention Safety Tips

Holiday Plants

- **Poinsettias** are not very poisonous in spite of common belief. Huge amounts would have to be eaten before stomach upset occurs. The sap can cause skin irritation in sensitive people.
- **Holly** - Eating several berries can cause nausea, vomiting and a feeling of extreme tiredness.
- **Mistletoe** can cause mild stomach and bowel upset, at most, if a few berries are eaten. Eating large amounts can cause more serious stomach upset and tiredness.
- **Amaryllis** - Eating parts of this plant may cause nausea, vomiting, stomach pain and diarrhea.
- **Christmas trees** – Most are varieties of pine or spruce and are not poisonous. Sharp needles can cause skin irritation and bleeding.

Holiday Decorations

- **Ornaments** are usually made of plastic, metal, wood or glass and children can choke or receive cuts from these. Lead poisoning is a concern with repeated exposure to antique or foreign made ornaments or toys with lead based paint.
- **Snow globes** are made of plastic and calcium carbonate. If a leak occurs and fluid is drunk, there is a chance for food poisoning if the water is not sterile. Some may contain ethylene glycol; parents and pet owners need to be wary.
- **Icicles or Tinsel** can cause serious injury to pets when eaten.

Gifts and Toys

- **Disc batteries** (from toys, watches, hearing aids, etc.) are easily swallowed and may cause harm if lodged in the throat. Call **Rocky Mountain Poison Center** right away.
- **Magnets** from toys can result in serious injury and/or death if more than one is swallowed.
- **After-shave, perfumes and colognes** can cause alcohol poisoning with large amounts.
- **Bubble baths and soaps** can cause immediate vomiting.
- **Chocolate** can cause vomiting, convulsions and serious heart problems in cats and dogs. Be aware that wrapped gifts arriving from out of town might contain chocolate.

Holiday Guests

- Visitors may carry their medicine and cosmetics in purses, backpacks and suitcases. Offer guests a locked cabinet for their medicine.
- When traveling with kids, check your surroundings and remove poisonous items such as vitamins, medicines, cosmetics and cleaning products from their reach.
- During the holidays, poison centers receive more calls about youngsters getting into alcohol due to greater access to leftover cocktails. Always empty glasses and place them out of reach of curious kids.
- Eating cigarettes and cigars can result in vomiting, sweating and seizures. Keep all ashtrays out of reach of children and empty their contents into a safe container at the end of the party.

