



A Guide for Families & Carers

Keeping Children **Safe** from Poisonous Substances in the Home

This leaflet provides helpful guidance on potential dangers in the home, how to avoid them and keeping children safe from harm.

Every week 500 children are rushed to hospital because they have swallowed something poisonous (Child Accident Prevention Trust, 2015). Find out how putting a few simple measures in place can help to avoid this.

What can we do to keep children safe from harmful household items?

Firstly, it is important for any harmful household items as well as alcohol, drugs and prescribed medication to be safely stored.

**Take a look around your home and think about the risks.
Did you know...**

The top 3 causes of poisoning in young children over the past 5 years have been:

1. Laundry and dishwasher tabs. Children often mistake these for brightly coloured sweets.
2. Nicotine from cigarettes.
3. E-cigarettes.

(UK National Poisons Information Service, 2015)



Top tips on keeping children safe from harmful substances in the home:

- ✓ Keep all harmful drugs, medicines or chemicals out of sight and out of reach.
- ✓ Don't think that child-resistant medication bottle tops are 100% 'child proof'. These can be easily opened, even by very young children.
- ✓ Keep medicines in original containers with clear labels and take care with brightly coloured tablets as they are especially tempting to children.
- ✓ Don't count your medicine out for the day and then leave it lying around. Take your medicine when children are not with you, so they don't try to copy you.
- ✓ Never pretend that your medicines are sweets, instead teach children about the safe use of medicines.
- ✓ Keep potentially harmful products high up and out of reach – never under the sink or on the floor by the toilet e.g. bleach.
- ✓ Use child safety catches on cupboards (although remember that these are not always 100% child safe!).
- ✓ Fit padlocks to cupboards, sheds or garages.
- ✓ Keep harmful substances in lockable containers. You can get advice about lockable containers by talking to your keyworker.
- ✓ Dispose of empty containers safely and out of a child's reach.
- ✓ If you have drunk alcohol, smoked, taken drugs or medication please do not let your baby or child sleep with you as there is an increased risk of harming or suffocating them.



Poisonous substances to remember...

- Alcohol (people often miss out alcohol when checking their homes).
- Cigarettes.
- E-cigarettes.
- Over the counter and/or prescribed medicines.
- Other Drugs (illegal substances).
- Dishwasher and laundry liquid capsules - remember that detergent capsules come in boxes that aren't child-proof.
- Household cleaning products e.g. bleach, bathroom cleaner and other dangerous chemicals – paint, anti-freeze and weed-killer.
- Remember that perfume, nail varnish remover, aromatherapy oils and mouthwash can all be poisonous to children.

**For more information or guidance –
please call: 01225 329411.**