



HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

Tips to Keep Children Safe from Poison

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March 14-20 is National Poison Prevention Week. Take some time to get rid of poisons in your home. A poison is any product or substance that can be harmful if used in the wrong way, by the wrong person, or in the wrong amount. People or animals can be poisoned if they eat, drink, breathe, inject, or get the harmful substance on skin or in their eyes. Millions of people are unintentionally poisoned every year, and children under the age of six are at the greatest risk. These tips can help keep children safe from poison.

Keep all household poisons and medicines in their original, labeled, child-resistant containers. Lock poisons and medicines out of children's sight and reach. Keep purses and diaper bags out of children's reach, including visitors' purses and suitcases.

Be careful with non-prescription and prescription medications and supplements. In 2009, almost 56% of the accidental poison exposure calls to the Washington Poison Center involved children under the age of six, of those 46.2% were poisoned by medications. To avoid confusion, do not refer to medications as "candy" or take them in front of children.

Take unwanted and expired medicines to a medicine return site, locations listed at www.takebackyourmeds.org. In Thurston County there are currently seven temporary locations:

- Lacey Police Department, 420 College Street S.E.
- Rainier City Hall, 102 Rochester St W
- Tenino Police Department, 358 McClellan Street S.
- Thurston County Sheriff's Office, 2000 Lakeridge Drive S.W.
- Tumwater Police Department at City Hall, 555 Israel Road
- Yelm Police Department, 206 McKenzie Ave. SE
- Group Health Cooperative*, 700 Lilly Road (*Unlike law enforcement offices, Group Health cannot accept controlled substances like Oxycontin or Vicodin).

Never leave children alone with household hazardous products or medications. Household cleaners, cosmetics, and personal care products are other common causes of poisoning. Most poisonings occur when the product is in use. If you are using a hazardous product such as a cleaner, take your child with you when answering the telephone or door. Return household and chemical products to safe storage immediately after use. Take unwanted hazardous products to HazoHouse at the Waste and Recovery Center, 2418 Hogum Bay Road. They are open from 8:00 until 5:00 Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday.

Take the time to teach children about poisonous substances. Teach them that Mr. Yuk means ask an adult for help. The Washington Poison Center can send Mr. Yuk stickers, or look for them at community events. Know which plants in and around your home can be poisonous and keep them away from children and animals.

- Keep the Poison Center Hotline **1-800-222-1222** on or near your phone.
- For more information on poison prevention call the hotline or visit www.wapc.org

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