



For any information regarding the Georgia Poison Center please contact us at:

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1.800.222.1222 poison emergencies

[www.georgiapoisoncenter.org](http://www.georgiapoisoncenter.org)



Georgia Poison Center



# Georgia Poison Center



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## **Tis' the Season for coughing and sneezing!**

During the winter season households tend to stock up on medicines to treat cold and flu symptoms. Make sure your medications are placed up and away from children, preferably in a locked cabinet.

Every 10 minutes a child younger than 6 years of age is taken to an Emergency Department to be treated for a poisoning from medicines, in the United States. About 40 children younger than 5 years of age die from accidental poisonings each year.

Most medicine poisonings happen in the home due to accessibility of prescription and over-the-counter medicines that are within reach of children. Medication poisonings are also primarily linked to medications looking and tasting like candy.

If you suspect a potential poisoning, don't wait for symptoms to appear, call the Poison Center immediately.  
(1-800-222-1222)

# Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, deadly gas produced by burning any fuel. CO is the leading cause of poisoning death in the United States.

Early symptoms of CO poisoning can mimic the flu or other illnesses. The symptoms may include: fatigue, dizziness, headache, throwing-up, trouble breathing, confusion and fainting. Carbon monoxide poisoning may lead to unconsciousness and death.

The most common sources of carbon monoxide include:

- Oil, wood or gas furnaces
- Space heaters (kerosene)
- Gas or oil water heaters
- Gas stoves
- Gas dryers
- Fireplaces and wood stoves
- Charcoal grills
- Automobiles
- Lawn mowers and other gas powered lawn equipment

To help protect you and your family from CO, follow these safety tips:

- Do not use the oven or gas range for heating your home
- Do not let the fireplace or space heaters run while you are sleeping
- Never use charcoal grills in your home or tent
- Never let your car run in the garage, even if the garage door is open
- Do not sleep in a parked car while the engine is on
- Install carbon monoxide detectors on all levels of your home.

The onset of winter brings not only chilly weather but also cough and colds, holiday decorations, and parties. Accidental poisonings occur when the normal household routine is changed. Traveling, illness or visitors in the home can increase the risk of a poisoning.

Listed below are winter safety tips.



## HOLIDAY PLANTS

Some of the common holiday plants, such as the poinsettia and mistletoe have often been considered very poisonous, even life-threatening. Caution should be exercised, ingestion of these plants is not fatal.

- **Poinsettias:** 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 and should be washed off with soap and water.
- **Holly berries:** bright red berries of this plant are attractive to small children. Nibbling on 1 or 2 berries will not cause any symptoms. Swallowing more can cause nausea, vomiting, stomach pain and diarrhea.
- **Mistletoe:** all parts of the plant contain toxic substances and if eaten can cause vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain. One or two berries or leaves eaten will not result in serious harm.
- **Christmas trees** (Pine, Spruce & Fir): Needles can cause skin irritation and choking, but are not toxic.

## GIFTS AND TOYS

As holiday gifts and toys are being given, remember to keep batteries, magnets, perfumes, soaps, and chocolate out of the reach of children and pets.

- **Disc Batteries:** these flat-shaped, coin-like batteries are commonly used in watches, cameras, hearing aids, games and calculators. If swallowed, they could become lodged in the throat and cause tissue damage or obstruction.
- **Magnets:** any size and shape can result in serious injury if more than one is swallowed.
- **After-shave, perfumes and colognes:** if a large amount is ingested, it can cause alcohol poisoning
- **Bubble baths and soaps:** vomiting may occur if ingested
- **Chocolate:** can cause vomiting, convulsions and serious heart problems in cats and dogs.



## HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Ornaments, tinsel and other holiday decorations may be made of glass, thin metal, styrofoam or wood. If any of these materials are swallowed it could cause choking and/or blockage.

- **Ornaments:** can be a choking hazard
- **Snow globes:** glass or plastic domes filled with water. The snow is made from a non-toxic chalk-like or plastic substance. However, the fluid contained in the globe could become contaminated with harmful bacteria over time, and cause vomiting and diarrhea if ingested.
- **Angel hair:** consists of spun glass, which can penetrate the skin, eyes and mouth on contact, causing severe irritation and pain.
- **Snow spray:** used to decorate windows, mirrors and trees. Can cause eye damage if sprayed directly into the eye from a pressurized container.
- **Oil candle lamps:** contain liquid fuels composed of hydrocarbons. Severe breathing problems can occur and lead to death if a person chokes on the liquid.

## HOLIDAY GUESTS

Holiday guests are in and out throughout the season and may not be aware of items they are carrying could become dangers.

- Guests may carry medication and cosmetics in their purse, backpacks or suitcase. Offer them a locked cabinet for these items.
- When traveling with kids, check your surroundings and remove poisonous items such as vitamins, medicines, cosmetic and cleaning products from their reach.
- Alcohol can be very dangerous to small children. Always empty glasses and place them out of the reach of children.
- 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.

# Upcoming Trainings

The Georgia Poison Center (GPC) Education Department works diligently to develop and implement innovative programs and strategies to prevent poisonings and raise awareness of the Georgia Poison Center and its services. These programs and strategies include:

- Poison Prevention Training Program
- AHLS
- CBRNE
- Explosion and Blast
- RPER
- NPER

Visit

[www.georgiapoisoncenter.org/public-education/](http://www.georgiapoisoncenter.org/public-education/)  
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