

## Provide Strategies to Prevent Poisonings

**Poisonings from meds and cleaning products are on the rise**...partly due to more use, and misuse, related to COVID-19.

Recent reports include kids ingesting hand sanitizer or meds left on counters or in drawers...and even adults drinking household cleaners.

It's scary...since ingesting a few squirts of hand sanitizer can cause alcohol poisoning in young children. Many hand sanitizers contain over 60% ethyl alcohol...stronger than most hard liquors.

And just 1 or 2 pills of an opioid (hydrocodone, etc) or sulfonylurea (glyburide, etc) may harm a toddler.

Cleaning products can be risky too. Mixing ammonia with bleach can create toxic gases...leading to shortness of breath or chest pain.

Plus some "all-natural" products contain essential oils (tea tree, etc)...which can be dangerous if ingested by humans or pets.

Take this time to raise awareness and reinforce good habits.

Remind patients to store meds, hand sanitizers, and cleaners "up, away, and out of sight"...ideally on a high shelf or locked cabinet. Some products have brightly colored labeling...which could entice kids.

Clarify the role of safety caps. They may slow kids down...but they're NOT childPROOF.

Encourage getting rid of unused meds. Point patients to take-back options...mail-back programs, pharmacy receptacles, etc.

Remind people to keep cleaners and disinfectants in their original containers...and only use them as directed on the label.

For example, the risk of mishaps can go up if cleaners are stored in water or soda bottles...or misused to sanitize food.

Tell patients to save the Poison Help line, 800-222-1222, on their phone...or bookmark the PoisonHelp.org website...just in case.

Share our patient handout, *Prevent Medication Poisonings in Your Home*...and see our technician tutorial, *Keeping Kids Safe From Medications*, for more strategies to reduce the risk of problems.

### Key References:

- <https://aapcc.org/> (5-27-20)
- MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69(16):496-8
- ISMP Med Safety Alert! Community/Ambul Care 2020;19(4):1-4
- <https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2020/american-academy-of-pediatrics-promotes-medicine-safety-to-prevent-poisonings/> (5-27-20)
- [www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Keep-Hand-Sanitizer-Out-of-Childrens-Reach.aspx](http://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Keep-Hand-Sanitizer-Out-of-Childrens-Reach.aspx) (5-27-20)

Pharmacy Technician's Letter. June 2020, No. 360610

Cite this document as follows: Article, Provide Strategies to Prevent Poisonings, Pharmacist's Letter, June 2020

The content of this article is provided for educational and informational purposes only, and is not a substitute for the advice, opinion or diagnosis of a trained medical professional. If your organization is interested in an enterprise subscription, email [sales@trchealthcare.com](mailto:sales@trchealthcare.com).

© 2020 Therapeutic Research Center (TRC). TRC and Pharmacist's Letter and the associated logo(s) are trademarks of Therapeutic Research Center. All Rights Reserved. | 3120 W. March Lane, Stockton, CA, 95219 | (209) 472-2240