Protecting Your Family from Unintentional Poisoning

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In 2004, more than 2.4 million exposures to human toxins were reported to poison control centers in the United States. Almost all of them occurred in homes, and 85% percent of poison exposures were unintentional. More than half of them involved children under six years old (National Safety Council, 2005). As a parent, that is a very frightening statistic.

If you look around your home, you might be surprised at the amount of generic products that can put your family at risk of unintentional poisoning. According to the National Safety Council, U.S. consumers purchase more than a quarter of a million different potentially hazardous household products for medication, cleaning, cosmetics, and environmental control. For example, many of the substances involved in poisoning of children 6 years old and younger included adhesives or glues, arts, crafts, or office supplies, batteries, chemicals, cleaning substances, cosmetics and personal care, deodorizers, dyes, fertilizers, paints and stripping agents, pesticides, pharmaceuticals or vitamins, plants, polishes and waxes, and tobacco products (National Safety Council, 2005).

What do you do to protect you or your family from toxic substances? Start by being aware of the potential hazards in your home, and take steps to poison-proof your home. For example, keep products in their original containers and out of the reach of children. And while not everyone is able to prevent poisoning, keep the nationwide poison control...
center’s number (1-800-222-1222) and your doctor’s number handy. Also be aware of the National Safety Council’s first aid procedures for poisoning, which can be found at http://www.nsc.org.

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References
