

Provide Strategies to Prevent Poisonings

You can **help raise awareness about poisonings**...especially during Poison Prevention Week in March.

We know the usual culprits...such as opioids, benzos, and iron.

But problems are on the rise with other substances.

For instance, accidental ingestion of cannabis edibles by young kids is skyrocketing...often leading to hospital visits. And melatonin overdoses in kids are up by over 500% during the last decade.

This isn't surprising...since use of these products spiked during the pandemic. Plus these substances can look like food or candy.

Remind patients to store meds and other substances (cleaning products, etc) "up, away, and out of sight"...ideally on a high shelf or locked cabinet. Even a very small amount of these may cause serious harm.

For example, ingesting a few squirts of alcohol hand sanitizer...or a couple doses of bupropion or glyburide...can be dangerous to a child.

Tell people not to rely completely on safety caps. They may slow kids down...but they're NOT childPROOF.

Emphasize prompt disposal of unused meds. Point patients to take-back options...such as returning meds to the pharmacy.

Ensure liquid meds are dispensed with appropriate measuring devices. Household spoons aren't accurate...and over 10% of poisonings with meds are due to kids receiving an incorrect dose.

Suggest patients save their provincial poison centre number on their phones, just in case.

If pets get into meds, have owners call a vet ASAP...or Animal Poison Control at 888-426-4435 for a fee.

Stay alert for people trying to manage a poisoning on their own, such as with activated charcoal...this can do more harm than good.

For instance, it would take hundreds of activated charcoal caps to equal the same dose given in the emergency department...and a delay in proper treatment can be deadly.

See our resource, *Dispensing Drugs for Pediatric Patients*, for more on how to keep kids safe.

Key References:

-<https://www.poisonhelp.org/> (3-7-23)

-<https://www.poison.org/> (3-7-23)

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