

Poisoning Prevention for Seniors



As we age, we must be aware of new poison dangers. According to Statistics Canada, seniors (those over age 65) make up approximately 15% of the population in Nova Scotia and PEI, one of the highest provincial distributions in Canada. There are certain poison dangers that we need to be even more aware of as we age.



Medication

- Survey data shows that 9 out of 10 seniors take at least one medication regularly
- On average seniors take 3 medications on a regular basis
- If possible, get all prescriptions from one doctor, and get them filled at the same pharmacy. Doing so will reduce risk of dangerous drug interactions
- Store medications away from food and other items that may be mixed up
- Keep medications in the original packaging
- Check off on a chart when doses have been taken, or have the pharmacist package pills in single doses
- Do not take medication in the dark or without your glasses on
- Dispose of expired medication by bringing it to the pharmacy

Cleaning Products/Chemicals:

- Never mix cleaning products together. Poisonous and hazardous gases could result.
- Store cleaning products and other chemicals in their original containers.
- Never put chemicals or cleaners into food or drink containers, not even for “just a second”. This is a common cause of poisonings

If you suspect a poisoning has occurred, contact the Poison Centre immediately by dialing 1-800-565-8161
In case of emergency, dial 911



The Poison Purse:

- Visiting with grandchildren is an exciting time, and sometimes we forget that we may be carrying items with us that are potential poisons to young children
- Children are curious and love to explore. Purses are a place where they commonly find poisons
- Whether visiting someone else's home, or bringing visitors into your own home, keep the following in mind:
 - Young children like to explore by putting things in their mouths
 - Keep purses stored up high and out of reach of children when visiting
 - Make sure that medications are in child-resistant packaging and locked up away from curious children
 - Other items like perfume, makeup, and hand sanitizer can be poisonous if they are ingested.
 - Many of these items do not come in child-resistant packaging and often smell or look yummy from a child's perspective

For more information on Seniors and Aging, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's website at:

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/index-eng.php>



If you have any questions, contact the Poison Centre 24 hours a day by dialing 1-800-565-8161