



1-800-222-1222

PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov

When accidents happen with chemicals or medicine, call Poison Help (1-800-222-1222). Get help right away from a nurse, pharmacist, or other poison expert. If someone has trouble breathing, call 911 or your local emergency ambulance number right away.

SEASONAL TIPS WINTER

Many people think poinsettias and Christmas cacti are poisonous. They aren't. But here are some real dangers to watch out for in winter:

Antifreeze

- Antifreeze is a poisonous liquid used in cars. It has a sweet taste. Children and animals like its taste. If even a little is swallowed, it can be harmful. It can cause kidney damage and death.
- Keep antifreeze, and all strong chemicals, in the containers they came in. Cap them tightly. Store them in a locked cabinet.
- Before throwing away an antifreeze container, rinse it with water. Replace the safety cap. Place the container in the trash.

Salt

- If eaten, salt used on driveways and sidewalks in winter can harm a pet or child.
- Store such salt with other poisons. Keep it out of reach and in a locked cabinet.

Mercury

- Avoid using glass mercury thermometers. A glass thermometer can break in a child's mouth.
- Use a digital thermometer to avoid the risk of breaking glass.
- Stay with children when taking their temperature
- Mercury is a hazardous waste. Spilled mercury should be cleaned up properly. Call Poison Help (1-800-222-1222) or your local health department for advice.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

- CO is a leading cause of poison deaths. Every year, CO poisoning results in hundreds of deaths. It causes many thousands of illnesses.
- CO is a poisonous gas. It has no color, odor, or taste. All fuel-burning devices make CO. They do this mostly when they aren't working properly, or are not used in a ventilated space. CO can collect in closed areas.

Sources of CO include:

- gas furnaces
- gas water heaters
- gas stoves
- gas ovens
- kerosene space heaters
- wood and gas fireplaces
- wood-burning stoves
- power generators
- car engines

People at greatest risk for CO poisoning are:

- pregnant women
- infants
- young children
- older people
- people with diseases that affect breathing
- people with heart disease

Signs of CO poisoning are similar to signs common to flu and some cold-weather viruses:

- headaches
- nausea
- vomiting
- dizziness
- confusion

To prevent CO poisonings in your home:

- Have at least one CO alarm in your home. The best places for a CO alarm are near bedrooms and close to furnaces.
- Have your heating system, vents, and chimney checked every year by experts.
- Always follow product instructions for installing and repairing appliances that burn fuel.
- Never burn charcoal inside a house or garage.
- Never use a gas oven to heat a house or apartment.
- Never use unvented fuel-burning devices in a house or apartment.
- Never run a car in a closed garage.

