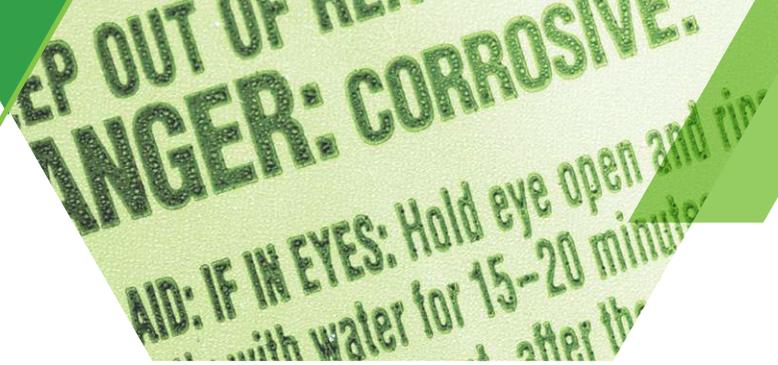


# Poisoning prevention



## Storage

- Store all medicines and chemicals out of reach and out of sight of children (at least 1.5m high), in a locked or child-resistant cupboard.
- Keep poisons in their original containers. Never transfer poison to drink or food containers.
- Always store medicines separately from household cleaning products.
- Only buy household products and medicines in child-resistant packaging. Check that the child-resistant closure is working correctly. You may need to clean around the neck of the container.
- Do not leave medications such as the contraceptive pill on a bedside table.
- Place empty medicine or cleaning bottles into an outside bin immediately – many poisonings occur when children access containers from the kitchen bin.

## Medicines

- Always read and follow the directions for use.
- Always take medicines in a well lit room.
- Do not take other people's medicines.
- Children tend to imitate adults, so avoid taking medicines in their presence.
- Refer to medicines by their proper names. They are not lollies.
- Visitor's bags may contain medicines. Store them out of reach of children.
- Keep medicines that require refrigeration in a tightly closed or locked container at the back of the fridge.
- Clean out your medicine cupboard regularly. Take unwanted or out-of-date medicines to your nearest pharmacy for disposal.

## Other risks around the home

- Always follow instructions when using chemicals and cleaning products. For example, when painting, spraying weeds or cleaning the oven, protect your skin, eyes and airways. Ensure there is good air circulation.
- Button batteries can cause life-threatening injuries if swallowed. Check the battery compartments on devices and toys are secure, and lock away spare batteries.
- Supervise children when using toys or devices containing button batteries. **If you suspect a child has swallowed a battery, go to the nearest hospital immediately.** Do not let the child eat or drink. Do not induce vomiting.
- Be aware of the plants in your garden and remove any that are known to be poisonous. Look out for mushrooms and other fungi, especially after rain. If someone is exposed to a poisonous plant, follow the advice in this fact sheet. Collect a sample (if safe to do so) and take a photo for possible later identification.

## Some points to remember

- The risk of poisoning increases when usual daily routines are disrupted. For example, when moving house, going on holiday, having visitors or household illnesses.
- Many poisonings occur when a product or medicine is not in its usual location. For example, when in use and left on a bench top or bedside table, or during transport from the shop to home.
- Take extra care to supervise children when visiting other households and businesses – they may not have medicines or other poisons stored safely.

## Poisons can include

- prescription medicines
- over-the-counter medicines such as iron tablets and paracetamol
- natural or alternative remedies
- essential oils such as eucalyptus and tea tree oil
- cleaning and laundry products
- button batteries
- kerosene, mineral turpentine, petrol
- perfumes and aftershaves
- tobacco, cigarettes, cigarette butts and nicotine replacement therapy products
- pesticides, weed killers
- paints
- some plants and mushrooms
- bites or stings by spiders, snakes, jellyfish etc.

For more detailed poisoning information, please visit [www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre](http://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre)

## Poisoning first aid

**If someone has collapsed or is not breathing, always call 000 first.**

**Only ring the Queensland Poisons Information Centre once the ambulance is on the way. Immediate first aid is very important in a poisoning emergency.**

### What to do

**If someone has swallowed a poison**

- Do NOT try to make the person vomit.
- Wipe or rinse the mouth and face.
- Call 13 11 26

**If someone has poison on their skin**

- Remove the contaminated clothing, taking care to avoid contact with the poison.
- Flood the skin with cool running water.
- Wash gently with soap and water and rinse well.
- Call 13 11 26

**If someone has poison in their eye(s)**

- Gently flood the eye with water from a cup, jug or slowly running tap. Continue for 10-15 minutes, holding the eyelids open.
- Call 13 11 26

**If someone has inhaled poison**

- Move the person to fresh air quickly if safe to do so. Avoid breathing any fumes.
- Open doors and windows.
- Call 13 11 26

For fast poisoning advice

 **13 11 26**  
24 hours, 7 days a week,  
from anywhere in Australia

Calls to the Queensland Poisons Information Centre are answered by pharmacists specially trained in toxicology and the provision of poisons information. Centre staff can determine whether medical attention is needed and provide first aid advice, as well as offer poisoning prevention information.

[www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre](http://www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/poisonsinformationcentre)

## Poisoning first aid and prevention

### Signs and symptoms of poisoning

**Common signs and symptoms to look for include:**

- burns, redness or blisters around the mouth and lips, from drinking certain poisons.
- burns, stains and odours on the person or their clothing, or on furniture, floor, rugs or other objects in the surrounding area.
- empty medication bottles or evidence of pills in the area.
- vomiting, difficulty breathing, sleepiness, confusion or other unusual signs.

**If you think someone has been poisoned... Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 immediately.**

**Do not wait for symptoms to occur.**

**IMPORTANT:** If it is safe to do so, it helps to have the container with you when you call the Poisons Information Centre. You may be asked for the name and any ingredients.



 **13 11 26**  
Poisons Information Centre

