

# SAFETY CORNER

## Public Safety Newsletter

TOPIC: Keeping Children Safe From Household Poisons  
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As I sat here pondering what to write for a safety message, I felt the warm breeze from my furnace kicking in which triggered a thought about the weather outside. It is that time of year when we all start to come inside for the winter because it is starting to get cold outside. The youngsters will be playing more inside and their curiosity starts to show up as they start to get cabin fever.

As a Firefighter/Paramedic and a Hazardous Materials Technician, I always take a look around, not only my own house, but all the stores that I go into and I start to think about the different chemicals that we keep at our homes. We need to take time to stop and think about what we keep under our kitchen sinks, or where ever you keep your cleaning supplies. When you are done reading this, you need to go there and look at your cleaning supplies, as if looking through the eyes of a child. Most little ones can't read yet so when they get into the area where we keep cleaning supplies, they don't stop and read the label to see what it is or what it is used for. Through the eyes of a child, 409 may look like Kool-aid; Pine-Sol may look like apple juice. How many children don't like Kool-aid or apple juice? This will probably show my age but as a child, I can remember my mom's cleaning supplies under her kitchen sink and remember seeing the skull and cross bones symbol on most of them. Since then, they have replaced the skull and cross bones symbol with Mr. Yuk. The reason for the change was because kids have said that seeing the skull and cross bones meant that it was pirate juice and they wanted to be like the pirates. Other things that are under our sinks are the soaps that we wash our dishes with either in the sink or the dishwasher and most of those have phosphates in them which, if a child gets into those can severely burn a child's throat sometimes bad enough to cause death, no matter what we do as parents or health care providers. As a health care provider the hardest call to deal with is one that involves a child especially if the child dies in the end. The best thing we can do as parents or providers for children is to secure cleaning supplies where kids can't get into them.

Another thing we need to keep out of their reach is our medications. There is a large difference in the dosages for medications from children to adults and if we think about what a medication is, we find that it is actually a form of a toxic material. The only difference between something being a poison and a medication is the dosage of it, so, it may be okay as a medication for an adult but could be very poisonous for a child. Another thing to take time to consider is the hand sanitizer's that have become very prevalent in today's society. Most of them are alcohol based products and if ingested, the child can suffer alcohol poisoning. If we should ever find ourselves in a position where we have a child that has gotten into the cleaning supplies under the sink or into our medications, there are 2 phone numbers that we need to remember. The first number is 911 to get medical help coming and the second phone number is 1-800-222-1222 which is the phone number to Sanford Poison Control.

Thanks for taking the time to read my ramblings, and from one parent to another, please take the time to think about our cleaning supplies, medications and how to keep the kids out of them. Take care and remember to enjoy your kids now because they grow up too fast.

Sincerely,

Doug Glover  
Firefighter / Paramedic

If you would like to learn about certain topics please email [cindy@mitchellidps.com](mailto:cindy@mitchellidps.com) and reference Safety Corner.

