



Holiday Poisoning Hazards

The holiday season is a time for celebration and happiness. Research shows that the number of poisoning incidents involving children rises during the holiday season. Common calls to the poison center during this time include cigarettes, batteries, food poisoning, holiday plants, bubble lights, angel hair, snow sprays, fireplace color crystals and ingestion of guests' medications by young children. The Nebraska Regional Poison Center would like to offer a few tips on how to make this **“the most wonderful time of the year.”**

- Keep small children and animals away from seasonal plants such as mistletoe and holly berries, yew plants and poinsettias. Poinsettias are not the fatal poison that they were once believed to be, but in large amounts can cause upset stomachs.
- Alcohol is found in holiday drinks and in gifts such as perfume and cologne. It is important to clean up immediately following all holiday parties. Remove all items that may contain alcohol and keep out of reach of small children. Remember to empty all ashtrays – it only takes a few cigarette butts to send a child to the hospital.
- Be mindful of icicles or tinsel. Both can be a choking hazard if swallowed. Angel hair is finely spun glass which can cause cuts or irritation when handled or swallowed.
- Visiting relatives may bring their medications. Over 50% of the calls to the Poison Center involve medications. **NEVER** leave medications on a nightstand – make sure to store these up and out of reach.
- Toys may contain button or disc batteries. If swallowed they can become lodged and cause serious injury or death if not removed. They may be found in games, watches, remotes and musical greeting cards.
- Post the telephone number of the Nebraska Regional Poison Center and your family physician near the phone. If you suspect a poisoning has occurred, call the Nebraska Regional Poison Center or your physician before attempting any emergency treatment.

Remember, prevention is the best treatment for poisonings. The Nebraska Regional Poison Center offers tips on holiday safety and poison prevention as a free community service to the public. If you have questions or would like to set up an interview, contact the Nebraska Regional Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.