TOXICTRIVIA

INDIANA POISON CENTER (800) 222-1222

Visit us on the web at www.iuhealth.org/poisoncontrol

Winter Safety

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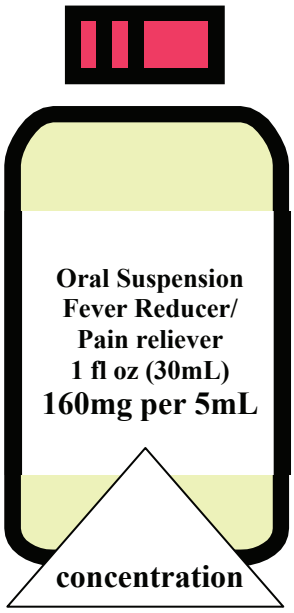
Infants' Acetaminophen Dosing Change

Manufacturers are changing the amount **(concentration)** of acetaminophen in medicines for infants. These new concentrations will have different dosing directions. During the transition, you may find both concentrations on store shelves and in your home.



What you need to know

- The medicine label for children under 2 years of age instructs you to call your doctor for dosing directions.
- Your doctor or pharmacist can give you the correct dosing instructions once they know the concentration of the acetaminophen in the product you are using.

How can I tell which concentration I have?

You will find the concentration for the medicine on the front of the medicine bottle, either **80mg/0.8mL** (old product concentration) or **160mg/5mL** (new product concentration).

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When calling your doctor or pharmacist for directions on how much medicine to give your child, you will need to know your child's:

- Age
- Weight
- Concentration of the medicine (from the label)

As your child grows, the dose of medicine needed will change. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist for the correct dose to give your child.

Important reminders

- Keep medicines locked away, out of reach of children
- Infants' acetaminophen concentrated drops have 3 times more medicine than the new Infants' acetaminophen oral suspension. If you give the wrong concentration or the wrong dose, you may overdose your child.
- Use only the dosing device that comes with the medicine (don't use kitchen spoons or measuring spoons for older children)
- Never give adult medicines to children
- Always carefully read and follow the directions on the label
- Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions *before* giving the medicine to your child.

Toxic Trivia

Test your poison knowledge with our 5 tricky questions!

Answers are on page 4- good luck!

The Dangers of Alcohol

Winter's here and it's time for football games, holiday parties and opportunities to come in from the cold to relax in front of a cozy fire. For some of us these scenes may be completed with the addition of an alcoholic beverage such as beer, hot cider, rum punch, eggnog and champagne for New Year's Eve.

Drinking alcoholic beverages is a part of many people's lives. For adults to drink in moderation is generally an acceptable practice. At the same time, when alcohol is added to social situations, extra caution must be used when children are around.

There are two basic situations where alcohol exposures in children occur:

- With younger children (up to age 6 or so) who unintentionally consume products or drinks that contain alcohol.
- With older children (school aged through teens) who deliberately drink alcoholic beverages.

Ethanol is the active ingredient in alcoholic beverages. The concentration of ethanol in various beverages ranges from 4-6% in beers, to 10–20% in wines, to 40-45% in "hard" liquors. If sufficient alcohol is drunk, the risk of intoxication develops.

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POISON PREVENTION

The Indiana Poison Center is sponsored by the Indiana State Department of Health and Indiana University Health.

Young Children
Young children tend to be exposed to alcohol (ethanol) in one of two ways. Ethanol is the active ingredient in some products children may encounter around the home. These include perfume, after-shave, mouthwash and rubbing alcohol. Fortunately, in most of these products the ethanol is denatured and tastes really bad. Most healthy children will not drink more than a mouthful or so of these products, which is enough to cause them to spit and sputter but not enough to cause significant signs or symptoms.

Alcoholic beverages, on the other hand, are often "camouflaged" by more pleasant tasting ingredients. Children who find left-over drinks can easily consume enough alcohol to cause serious poisoning.

Although some people seem to find it humorous if a small child "gets tipsy", in reality this is a poisoning situation that requires rapid evaluation and treatment. If the blood ethanol level is elevated enough to cause "intoxicated" symptoms, it can cause dangerously low blood glucose, unconsciousness, respiratory depression - and even death.

What should you do if you suspect a young child has drunk an alcoholic beverage?
Treat this as a serious situation - it is not a laughing matter, but a situation that puts the child at significant risk. **Call the Indiana Poison Center immediately at 1- 800-222-1222.** Bring the child, the beverage and the original alcohol container to the phone with you. An experienced Specialist in Poison Information (SPI) will help you assess the situation, determine how much ethanol the child might have drunk and then decide what treatment is required (if any). It is relatively easy to keep children safe from alcohol. Exposures can be avoided by keeping alcoholic beverages out of the reach of children. Left over alcoholic drinks should be promptly collected and disposed of. Children should have easy access to ***non***-alcoholic beverages during parties and other events. Adults should closely monitor all situations where children are around alcohol.

Older Children and Teenagers
Older children are also at risk for poisoning from ethanol, although the circumstances of the exposure change. Older children may deliberately drink alcoholic beverages in a social situation. Although the legal drinking age is 21 years in Indiana, even at very young ages children have access to, and sometimes encouragement to drink, alcoholic beverages.

Binge drinking is often associated with major social events, such as joining a fraternity or sorority, or having a 21st birthday. Unfortunately, binge drinking on these occasions is considered by some to be an acceptable "ritual" for growing up.

The risks associated with adolescent and young adult drinking are huge. In addition to the well-publicized risks of drinking and driving, young people who binge drink or regularly drink alcohol are more inclined to:

- Have school and social problems.
- Have mental health problems (such as anxiety or depression)
- Attempt or complete suicide
- Be sexually assaulted or engage in risky sexual behaviors

Young people die every year from drinking too much – not by drinking and driving, but by "drinking and sleeping", when they pass out and don't wake up. This condition is commonly termed alcohol poisoning. In this situation the blood ethanol level is so high that it causes severe central nervous system depression, respiratory depression and arrest, and cardiac depression and arrest.

How do you know if someone has drunk too much? What should you do?
A person who has consumed too much alcohol may have symptoms including:

- Vomiting
- Loss of consciousness
- Lack of response to stimuli such as being pinched or having their name called
- Cool, cold, clammy, pale, blue or gray skin
- Slow or irregular breathing (less than 8 breaths a minute or more than 10 seconds between breaths)

A person who has been drinking alcohol and has ***any*** of these symptoms should ***not*** be put to bed to "sleep it off"- take them immediately to the closest emergency room. **Call 911 or the Indiana Poison Center (800-222-1222) for assistance.**

For more information on alcohol abuse or binge drinking, look in the phone book under "Alcohol." Local hospitals,

1. True or False: Care should be taken when handling poinsettia plants, since they are poisonous to humans.

mental health treatment centers and Alcoholics Anonymous are just a few of the many options available. Check out the websites listed below for assistance with alcohol problems in general. For an immediate problem, call 911 or the **Indiana Poison Center.**

The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information **www.health.org**

The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information **www.health.org**

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism **www.niaaa.nih.gov**

Parents – The Anti-Drug **www.theantidrug.com**

Facts on Tap **www.factsontap.org**

BRAD (Be Responsible About Drinking) **www.brad21.org**

Art Supplies for Children

What child doesn't love to draw, paint and color? What parent doesn't have a refrigerator covered in children's artwork? At the same time, it's important to keep in mind that art products are a mixture of chemicals that deserve respect and careful handling to avoid poison exposures. When supplies are handled correctly, children can safely enjoy art activities. Unfortunately, young children like to taste attractive art products and older children may splash products into eyes or onto skin. Although most exposures cause only minor effects, it's important to handle art supplies with care. When choosing art supplies for use by children, check the product's certification. Many art supplies have the seals of the Arts and Crafts Materials Institute. Products with the AP (Approved Product) seal are certified "to contain no materials in sufficient quantities to be toxic or injurious to humans, including children, or to cause acute or chronic health problems." These products are best for use by young children. Products with the CL (Cautionary Label) Seal are certified "to be properly labeled for any known health risks and with information on the safe and proper use of these materials." CL-certified products are more appropriate for adult use.

When children use art supplies:

- Read labels carefully and follow all instructions for safe use and disposal.
- Supervise all art activities - an adult should always be present.
- Throw away products that have passed their expiration dates.
- Don't eat or drink while using art products.
- Wash up skin, equipment and the environment after using art supplies.
- Never use products to paint on skin or decorate food unless the product is specifically labeled for that use.
- Store art products in their original containers, locked up and out of sight and reach of children.
- Keep adult art and hobby materials out of reach. These materials are typically much more toxic, and pose a much greater risk to children than to adults.
- Watch out for children having an adverse reaction to products that are being used. Remember that individual children may react differently to the same materials.
- Keep the number for the **Indiana Poison Center** near phones, in case a child swallows a product. Keep the product handy for label information if you do need to call the poison center.
- Take special precautions with children who have allergies, asthma, or other special needs. Discuss with a health care provider the type of activities that should be either limited or eliminated altogether. A parent should inform the health care provider of the types of arts activities and materials to which the child is being exposed both at home and in school.

For more information, go to: http://school.familyeducation.com/art/parents-and-teacher/38480.html#ixzzlffqAsvWO

If a child does chew on a crayon, eat some glue, or splash paint into eyes, help is just a phone call away. Call the **Indiana Poison Center** at **1-800-222-1222** for immediate help.

New CDC Campaign - "Up and Away"

In 2009, America's 57 poison centers received more than 575,000 calls involving children younger than 6 and medicines – including prescription and over-the-counter drugs, herbal products and vitamins. In addition, according to the CDC, more than 60,000 young children are treated in emergency rooms every year because they get into medicine

2. How did the poison substance "Agent Orange" earn its nickname?

3. What Greek philosopher died after being forced to drink a poison hemlock drink?

4. In the 19th century, botulism was first identified in - and became widely associated with - what type of food?

Up And Away Campaign

while their parents or caregivers were not looking.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers has partnered with the CDC in its new ***"Up and Away and Out of Sight"*** campaign, which educates parents and caregivers about how to store medicine safely and protect the health of their children. Experts at America's poison centers encourage every parent, grandparent and caregiver to follow these important reminders:

- **Put medicines and vitamins up and away – out of reach and out of sight.** Children are curious and put all sorts of things in their mouths. Even if you turn your back for less than a minute, they can quickly get into things that could hurt them. Pick a storage place in your home that your child cannot reach or see. Different families will have different places. Walk around your house and decide on the safest place to keep your medicines and vitamins.
- **Put medicines and vitamins away every time.** This includes medicines and vitamins you use every day. Never leave them out on a kitchen counter or at a sick child's bedside, even if you have to give the medicine again in a few hours.
- **Be prepared in case of an emergency:** Program the Poison Control number into your cell phone **1-800-222-1222.**
- **Call your poison center right** away if you think your child might have gotten into a medicine or vitamin.
- **Hear the click to make sure the safety cap is locked.** Always relock the cap on a medicine bottle. If the bottle has a locking cap that turns, twist it until you hear the click. Remember, even though many medicines have safety caps, children may be able to open them. Every medicine and vitamin must be stored up and away and out of children's reach and sight.
- **Teach your children about medicine safety.** Teach your children what medicine is and why you must be the one to give it to them. *Never* tell children medicine is candy to get them to take it, even if your child doesn't like to take his or her medicine.
- **Be prepared in case of an emergency.** Call your poison center at 1-**800-222-1222** right away if you think your child might have gotten into a medicine or vitamin. Program the poison center number into your home and cell phones so you will have it when you need it.

Learn more about the CDC campaign at **www.UpAndAway.org**

IPC Specialist elected to AAPCC Board of Directors

We are pleased to announce that Indiana Poison Center Specialist, Gwenn Christianson, has been elected to the American Association of Poison Control Centers' Board of Directors.

5. Female black widow spiders, whose venom is poisonous, can be identified by a red marking on their abdomen that appears in what shape?

Gwenn has been a Poison Specialist at the Indiana Poison Center since 1988, becoming a Certified Poison Specialist in 1990. Over the years Gwenn has been involved in many different facets of poison center practice, including developing continuing education for herself and coworkers, teaching the public and health care professionals about poison exposures, writing public and professional educational material, and conducting research. She has been awarded two research grants, has been very active on AAPCC Committees, appointed to the national AAPCC Guidelines Consensus Panel and since 2002 she has been the Team Leader at the Indiana Poison Center.

Gwenn is married and is the mother of 5 children.

Congratulations Gwenn !

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Contact Barbara Cole at 317-962-9248 if you have questions regarding duplication of information.

Answers to Quiz:

1. False (Poinsettias are NOT toxic as once believed, but mistletoe berries are.)
2. It was housed in orange-striped canisters
3. Socrates
4. Sausage (The airtight casings made a nice home for the bacterium.)
5. An hourglass