

Is your home poison proof?



Remove the risk. Put poisons away. **Straight away.**



Poisoning is the third highest cause of 0–4 year old child injury hospitalisation in Victoria.¹

¹ Based on 2006–2008 hospital admissions data from the Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit, Monash University Accident Research Centre.

The facts

1

Young children are accidentally poisoned in the home at an alarming rate. Yet the majority of parents do not think it will happen to children in their home.

2

In Victoria, at least six children a day receive medical attention after swallowing poison.*

* Victorian Poisons Information Centre
Annual Report 2010

3

Some of the most common poisons found in the home are:

- medicines
- caustic substances such as dishwashing powder, oven and drain cleaners
- petrol, mineral turpentine and weed killers
- bleaches
- essential oils (eg: eucalyptus oil)².

4

Children are more likely to get hold of poisons:

- when they are being used
- before they have been put away
- when they are left out to use later.

5

Children aged one to two years are most at risk of swallowing poison. This is when they begin to move about and tend to put everything in their mouth.

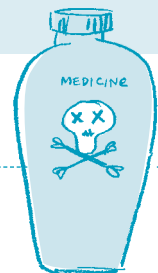
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Poisoning often coincides with unexpected changes in a child's development. As they get older, children are more able and curious than many parents give them credit for.

² Victorian Poisons Information Centre

**REMOVE
THE RISK**

Make it a habit to only take medicines out of a safe storage area when you intend to use them. After use, immediately place the product back in a locked cupboard or out of reach and out of sight of your child.





Amelia's mother's story

Amelia comes from a loving home. But last August she nearly died – poisoned by swallowing hay fever tablets.

Her Mum tells:

'I'd just gone outside to hang out the washing when my two and a half year old, Amelia woke unexpectedly from her nap.

Amelia was hungry, and wandered into the kitchen. She pulled a stool over to the kitchen bench, and saw a brightly coloured packet of what she thought were lollies. She opened the packet, which actually contained hay fever tablets, reached inside and ate two of them.

When I found her, she was drowsy and unsteady on her feet. Her eyes began rolling back and her muscles went into spasms.

I rushed her to the Royal Children's Hospital, where she was treated with drugs to stabilise her. She nearly died.

Learn from my family's experience – keep all medicines, cleaning products, cosmetics, soaps, hazardous chemicals

and other poisons out of reach and out of sight of your children.

Otherwise, they could be gone – just like that! **Remove the risk. Put poisons away. Straight away.**

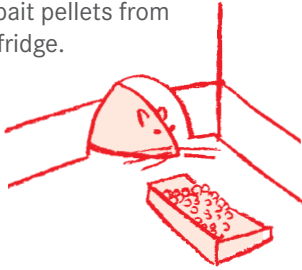
Anybody's child can be poisoned at home

Most young children who are accidentally poisoned at home come from loving families with attentive, caring parents or guardians. However, it's simply not possible to watch your children every minute of every day.

That's why it's so important to store poisons safely all the time.

Real life situations

Two year old Erin had green powder around her mouth after she found and ate the rat bait pellets from behind the fridge.



Ten month old Nicola swallowed blood pressure tablets she found while playing with her grandmother's handbag.



Four year old Chloe drank cleaning liquid that her dad brought home from work in a small juice bottle.



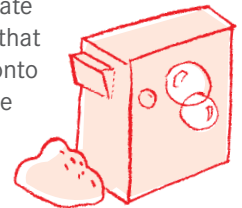
Three year old John licked his fingers after dipping them in a container soaking in turpentine.



One year old Grace licked her fingers after playing with eucalyptus oil and vaporiser fluid in the vaporiser unit left on her bedroom floor.



Two year old Jamie opened a cupboard and ate laundry powder that had spilled out onto the bottom of the cupboard.



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**REMOVE
THE RISK**

When using household products, replace container lids securely and, wherever possible, place the product back in its safe storage place – even during prolonged periods of use.

Where are the risks in your home?

DON'T LEAVE any medicines out of their normal storage area before, during or after use.

DON'T LEAVE detergents, bleach, dishwasher powders, cleaning products, fly spray or rat poison under kitchen, bathroom or laundry sinks unless these areas can be locked.



Poison proof your home

Medicines, common household products, hazardous chemicals and many personal items are all poisonous, because they can harm your child if swallowed or sprayed in the eye.

Take the time to walk through each room of your house with this checklist, and ensure that these items are locked safely away or out of the sight and reach of young children.

KITCHEN

- ☐ Dishwasher powders and liquids
- ☐ Oven cleaners
- ☐ Detergents
- ☐ Cleaning products
- ☐ Cleaning sponges
- ☐ Vitamins and medications
- ☐ Concentrated food products (eg Vanilla essence)
- ☐ Alcohol
- ☐ Cigarettes
- ☐ Rat bait
- ☐ Insect repellent

BATHROOM

- ☐ Medications, including vitamins and contraceptive pills
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Cosmetics
- ☐ Cleaning products
- ☐ Lotions and creams
- ☐ Shampoo and conditioner
- ☐ Nail polish and nail polish remover

LAUNDRY

- ☐ Detergents
- ☐ Bleach
- ☐ Cleaning products
- ☐ Mops, brooms and cleaning sponges
- ☐ Pet medications
- ☐ Kitty litter

SHED/GARAGE

- ☐ Drain cleaners
- ☐ Paints
- ☐ Mineral turpentine
- ☐ Weed killers and insecticides
- ☐ Fertilisers
- ☐ Pool chemicals
- ☐ Glues

BEDROOM

- ☐ Medications, including vitamins and contraceptive pills
- ☐ Lotions and creams
- ☐ Perfumes

**REMOVE
THE RISK**

Older siblings may have many different things that could be harmful in their bedrooms. Ensure that older siblings keep their medicines, cosmetics and other poisonous items locked away or out of reach and out of sight of young children.

10 tips to prevent poisoning

- 1 Lock poisons away.**
Medicines, hazardous chemicals, cleaning detergents and personal cosmetics and oils are all dangerous to young children. Hardware stores have many different solutions for you.
- 2 Store poisons out of reach and sight.**
If you can't lock them away, put your poisons on high shelves behind closed cupboards.
- 3 Don't underestimate your child's abilities or interests.**
Children's abilities and interests change quickly. Always use safe storage areas, and put poisons away straight after use.
- 4 Check that the child-resistant cap is working on medicine and cleaning containers.**
- 5 Avoid taking medicines in front of your children.** Children tend to imitate their parents.
- 6 Never refer to medicines as 'lollies'.** Refer to them only by their real names.
- 7 Always keep your dishwasher door locked.**
Never place dishwashing powder into the soap container until you are ready to turn the appliance on.
- 8 Don't leave paint brushes to soak in mineral turpentine.**
Clean them immediately or keep them out of reach and out of sight until you can clean them properly.
- 9 Keep visitors' handbags out of your child's reach.**
- 10 Never transfer chemicals or cleaning products to another container, especially food or drink containers.**

Remove the risk. Put poisons away. Straight away.