

Poison Safe Practices

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Information from the Missouri Poison Center

Print and distribute or post for your clientele!

Deck the halls

The old Christmas carol says the holiday season is “the most wonderful time of the year”. While it is an exciting time of year, the season may also cloud a child’s judgment so it’s important to deck your home safely to avoid some of the potential holiday hazards. Use these tips, courtesy of the Missouri Poison Center, to keep the holidays merry, peaceful, and safe:

- If relatives come to stay during the holidays, be sure their medications are put away. Children love to explore suitcases, purses and coat pockets. Find a safe location for guests to store their medications, and remind guests not to leave medications on the nightstand or in pill reminder boxes that can be reached by children. A child might wander into what is being used as the guest’s room at any time. What clearly appears to be medication to you can look like candy to a child.
- Keep all over-the-counter and prescription medicines up and out of reach of children.
- Button batteries can cause serious injury if swallowed. Make sure small button batteries are not available to children. Avoid toys that use button batteries.
- Be cautious if using bubble lights because they contain a toxic liquid.
- Be mindful that the older ornaments may be decorated with harmful lead paint.
- Keep tasty drinks containing alcohol out of children’s reach. Alcohol poisoning is a common risk for children during the holiday season. Remove partially empty cups and pour them out as soon as possible. Remember to clean up before going to bed after a holiday party. When the little ones wake early and wander throughout the house, you don’t want them to find colorful and appealing drinks that smell and taste sweet. Kids imitate adults, and may drink the beverages they see adults drinking. Children become ‘drunk’ much more quickly than adults, and they can develop a low blood sugar in response to alcohol, so even small amounts can be dangerous.
- Some holiday plants are toxic. Keep small children and pets away from Mistletoe, Holly and Jerusalem Cherry plants. The poinsettias are not toxic.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors.

Safe Storage of Buprenorphine

In the last three years, the Missouri Poison Center has seen an increase in buprenorphine exposures in children due to unintentional ingestions. Buprenorphine (Subutex® or Suboxone®) is prescribed for the management of opioid drug dependence and moderate to severe pain. Buprenorphine as well as other opiate pain relievers are very toxic to children. This medicine can be abused. Keep your medicine in a safe place to protect it from theft.

- Keep buprenorphine in its original, labeled prescription container with child-resistant closure.
- Do not place buprenorphine tablets or films on counters, sinks, dressers or nightstands for later use.
- Do not store buprenorphine in pockets, bags, purses, backpacks or carrying cases.
- Do not share this medicine with anyone. Selling or giving away this medicine is dangerous and against the law.
- Keep buprenorphine out of sight and reach of children.
- Keep buprenorphine in a locked box, bag or cabinet.
- Do not leave buprenorphine in the bathroom, car, or any publicly accessible space.
- Discard unused medicine.
- Discard film wrapping immediately after use by folding the package and disposing of it in the trash.
- Pets and children can be harmed if they find used or lost packages.



Poison Center help is free, expert and confidential. We help people of all ages—in all types of situations.



Be MO prepared. Program the nation-wide poison center number into your phone.

