

How well do you know household poisons?

NEXT WEEK, March 15-21, is the 27th National Poison Prevention Week. While the possibility of an accidental poisoning exists all year long, the week is highlighted to provide education and prepare individuals in case a poisoning should occur.

Last year, the Poison Control Center at Children's Hospital had 84,000 emergency calls and over half were poisonings of children under five years of age. The two most frequent causes of child poisonings are:

- Under 1 year of age — plants, including leaves, mushrooms, berries.
- From 1 to 5 years of age — over-the-counter drugs, particularly non-aspirin pain relievers and antibiotics.

Since most poisonings occur in the home, but fortunately are not toxic enough to require hospital care, information and phone numbers should be readily available.

CHECK YOUR poison knowledge by taking the following quiz. Correct answers are at the end.

1. Children under the age of 5 are accidentally poisoned more often than any other age group. True or False.
2. Thousands of small children are poisoned each year by common household products. True or False.
3. Only substances with a "Caution — Poison" label can harm a child. True or False.
4. Mixing ammonia with bleach forms a very irritating gas. True or False.
5. All medications can be used for as long as they last. True or False.
6. Leftover household cleaning products can be stored in empty food containers as long as they are properly labeled. True or False.

Heating bills dip this year

Natural gas customers of Consumers Power Co. should save more than \$150 on a typical home this winter.

Twin reasons, said the utility, are decreasing rates and one of the mildest winters on record in Michigan. The company serves most of the metro Detroit suburbs.

The utility's major supplier, Trunkline Gas Co., has announced a reduction of 4 percent in the rate Consumers Power pays for natural gas. That will save an average residential gas customer approximately \$5.50 annually.

OTHER RATE reductions announced earlier by Trunkline and Panhandle Eastern Pipe Line Co. are saving a typical residential gas customer \$89 from September 1986 to September 1987. In 1986, the rates Consumers Power charged to residential natural gas customers were 7 percent below 1985 rates.

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consumer mailbag

Terry Glibb

7. A potential poison is: (a) a product labeled poison; (b) any substance that is misused; (c) a liquid harmful only to children.

8. Potential poisons include: (a) aspirin substitutes; (b) ammonia products; (c) household cleaning products; (d) all of the above.

9. Syrup of ipecac (a) is a type of cough medicine, (b) makes a person vomit, (c) neutralizes poisons, (d) is put on burrs.

ANSWERS:

1. True. Nearly 60 percent of all

poisonings occur in this group.

2. True.

3. False. Most household products do not carry a poison warning but can do serious, if not fatal, damage if swallowed.

4. True. Not only irritating but sometimes fatal.

5. False.

6. False. Most children do not read labels. They recognize the container.

7. B — any substance that is misused.

8. D — all of the above.

9. B — makes a person vomit. Syrup of ipecac should ONLY be used on the advice of a physician.

ACCIDENTAL poisonings can happen to anyone, at any time, in any situation.

Survey your home closely inside and out. Make sure all medications, cleaning products and pesticides are clearly labeled in the original container and kept under lock and key. Never assume a high shelf is high enough.

For further information regarding poison prevention, including phone stickers, poison prevention guides and lists of poisonous plants, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Poison Control Center
Children's Hospital
3901 Beaubien
Detroit, 48201

Poison Control Center Emergency: 745-5711 (Detroit area) Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-462-6642.

Cobo Hall, Detroit. A \$20 fee that includes lunch. For further information call 745-5335 or 226-6260.

ECO-TIP: The Poison Prevention Center and the FDA are sponsoring a "Safe At Home" conference on Tuesday, March 17, from 8:30 to 4 p.m. in

The Consumer Mailbag answers your questions. Address mail to: Consumer Mailbag Concern Detroit, 1025 Shelby, Detroit, MI 48226.

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