



# Holiday Hazards and Winter Warnings



The holiday season is an exciting time of the year with parties, decorations and gifts. Unfortunately, holiday festivities and winter weather also bring an increased risk for poisonings. As the holidays approach, the Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention would like to share a few poison prevention tips.

## Carbon Monoxide (CO)

CO is an odorless, colorless, poisonous gas that is created from burning fuel. To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

- ✓ Have a professional technician inspect the gas-burning appliances and venting and chimney systems in your home at the beginning of the winter.
- ✓ Make sure appliances and chimneys have proper airflow.
- ✓ Do not use the oven or gas range for heating your home, and do not let the fireplace or space heater run while you are sleeping.
- ✓ Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home. Store kerosene and gasoline out of the reach and sight of children.

## Decorations and Gifts

- ✓ Holly, Mistletoe, and Jerusalem Cherry are common holiday plants that can be poisonous if swallowed. Keep these decorations out of the reach of children.
- ✓ Neither Christmas Cactus nor Poinsettia is poisonous when eaten, however eating many leaves may cause mild stomach upset. Also the sap of the Poinsettia plant may cause a skin rash, and should be washed off with soap and water.
- ✓ Other common holiday items to keep away from children include lamp oil, essential oils, batteries, nail products, and air freshener sprays.
- ✓ The liquid in bubble lights may be harmful if swallowed.

## Antifreeze

Antifreeze is a common automotive product that can cause severe poisoning or even death when swallowed.

- ✓ To prevent poisoning, store antifreeze in its original container. Because antifreeze looks and smells sweet, it can be confused with common beverages.
- ✓ Keep antifreeze in a locked cabinet.

## Entertainment

- ✓ Keep alcohol in a locked cabinet out of the reach and sight of children. After parties, be sure that all glasses are emptied and not left on tables for young children to find.
- ✓ Alcohol is also found in holiday gifts such as perfume, cologne, shaving lotion and mouthwash
- ✓ Read your medication labels and be aware of any warnings about drinking alcohol while taking prescription or over-the-counter medications.
- ✓ Keep all tobacco out of reach of children, including emptying ashtrays promptly. Eating tobacco products may cause nausea and vomiting in small amounts. Larger amounts may cause convulsions.
- ✓ Follow proper meat and poultry handling guidelines when preparing food, including washing hands and surfaces thoroughly that have come in contact with raw meat before they touch other foods. For more information call the USDA Meat and Poultry hotline at 1-800-535-4555.

**24-HOUR POISON HOTLINE 1-800-222-1222**