Protect your child – 10 common household products that could put your family at risk

We know you go to great lengths to protect your children from poisonous products around the house. You keep prescription and over-the-counter medications in a cabinet out of their reach. You lock cleaning products securely away under the sink. In your garage, paint thinners, mothballs, pesticides and antifreeze are stored on the highest shelves. Wine, beer and other alcoholic beverages are locked away as well.

But are you aware that the following everyday products should be kept out of the reach of children, too?

1. **Vitamins with iron.** Many people don't think of vitamins as medication, but swallowing as few as five of these can kill a child. This is a top cause of poisoning death in children under the age of 6.

2. **Arts and crafts supplies.** If not specifically made for children, crayons, glue, paints, colored pencils, markers, ink and other art supplies can poison your child.

3. **Batteries.** Over time, dangerous chemicals can leak from batteries. Batteries made of mercury, cadmium or lead acid are the most dangerous, but all types are harmful. Button batteries are especially dangerous to children and pets.

4. **Correction fluid.** This white liquid contains a flammable chemical that is hazardous if inhaled or ingested.

5. **Toothpaste.** Toothpaste contains fluoride, which is poisonous and potentially fatal.

6. **Bath and baby oils.** Swallowing one mouthful of baby oil, if breathed into the lungs, can cause lung inflammation or death. Related products include massage oils and some makeup removers.

7. **Houseplants.** These include, but are not limited to, azaleas, rhododendrons, daffodils, holly and lily of the valley. Ingestion can cause mild to fatal reactions.

8. **Blood pressure monitors, compact fluorescent lightbulbs and thermometers.** If a mercury-containing product breaks and mercury is released, children can suffer damage to their digestive and nervous systems as well as their kidneys. Some home blood pressure monitors may hold up to 2.5 pounds of mercury.

9. **Shoe polish.** Many types contain a harmful chemical used by dry cleaners and textile mills.

10. **Mouthwash, aftershave, hand sanitizers, perfumes and colognes.** These products may contain alcohol and pose a serious health threat to children.
Symptoms of poisoning

If your child has any of these symptoms, they may be signs of poisoning:

- Burns or stains around her mouth
- Strange-smelling breath
- Inability to follow you with his eyes
- Eyes that seem to go around in circles
- Unusual sleepiness.

Call 9-1-1 if the child is:

- Unconscious, confused, groggy or agitated
- Having seizures
- Wheezing or having trouble breathing
- Having trouble moving or with coordination
- Drooling or having trouble swallowing
- Having vision problems
- Complaining of burning in his mouth or stomach and has swallowed a caustic material such as a household cleaner or drain cleaner
- Slurring words.

In case of poisoning

If you suspect your child has been poisoned but doesn’t have the life-threatening symptoms above, call the Poison Control Center right away. The number is 800-222-1222. Keep this number by your phone or posted on your refrigerator in case of an emergency. Provide as much of this information as possible:

- The name of the poisonous product
- How the poison was taken (swallowed, breathed in, splashed on skin or in eyes)
- Your child's age, weight and height
- Any health problems your child has
- Whether or not your child has vomited

You may be instructed to give your child syrup of ipecac, which will induce vomiting. Always have ipecac in your home in case of an emergency. Remember not to give this to your child unless you are told to do so. Vomiting can sometimes make matters much worse. You may be directed to the nearest emergency room. If so, take the poisonous substance with you.

Do you have doubts about whether or not a product is safe? Err on the side of caution and place it well out of your little one's reach.