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Babysitters' Guide: Poison Prevention & Child Safety

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You can feel proud that a parent trusts your skills and character to care for their most beloved person in the world: their child. By learning as much as possible about household products and poison prevention, you are taking your caregiving skills to a new level of expertise. After all, many parents and even professionals don't know enough about common household poison dangers.

Tips for Babysitters

- Memorize the Michigan Poison Control telephone number: **1-800-222-1222** and make sure to mention to parents that it would be good to post it near all telephones in the home. You can pre-program it into your cell phone, or use the itunes app called PoisonHelp.
- Know where the kids are at all times and know what they are doing. If they become quiet, make sure to periodically check on them to make sure they are okay.
- Make sure safety latches on cabinets and drawers are in working order. Make sure tamper-resistant caps on medicine bottles and household products are on tight. But always remember tamper-resistant and child-proof packaging cannot substitute for careful adult supervision.
- Never refer to medicine or vitamins as "candy" to make a child want to take it. It may tempt them to take real medicine, which is often colorful and attractive to children.
- Don't let children get hungry. A hungry child is more likely to look around for something to eat and may eat something harmful.
- Don't leave any personal belongings, especially your purse, out where a child could rummage through it and perhaps find medicine, makeup, perfumes or vitamins all potentially poisonous to a child or pet.
- If you perform chores while babysitting, NEVER leave a household product out, unsupervised, even for "a minute" while answering a phone or doorbell. It only takes an unsupervised SECOND for a child to eat or drink a poison left out in the open.

- Eyes roll in circles
- Child loses consciousness
- Becomes sleepy before normal bedtime or naptime
- Lips or skin around or in mouth have stains or burns
- Breathes with difficulty/labored breathing
- Can smell a substance on the child's breath

Steps to take if a child has been poisoned

- Do not panic. Many patients can be successfully treated at home with guidance from a doctor or nurse at the poison control emergency hotline. The number to call in Michigan is **1-800-222-1222**.
- If the child is unconscious or unresponsive, call **9-1-1** as soon as possible.
- If the child is conscious, follow these instructions depending on the method of poisoning:

Inhaled Poison

- Get the child to fresh air immediately
- Avoid breathing fumes
- Open all windows and doors fully
- Call **1-800-222-1222** for expert help from the Poison Control Center at the Children's Hospital of Michigan

Poison on Skin

- Remove any affected clothing
- Rinse skin continuously with water for five minutes
- Wash skin gently with soap and water, then repeat.
- Call **1-800-222-1222** for expert help from the Poison Control Center at the Children's Hospital of Michigan

Poison in Eye

- Rinse the affected eye with lukewarm water for five to ten minutes
- Have the child blink as much as possible while rinsing. Do not force the eyelid open.
- Call **1-800-222-1222** for expert help from the Poison Control Center at the Children's Hospital of Michigan

Swallowed Poison