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## TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT POISONINGS IN YOUR HOME DURING NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK



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**OCALA, Fla.**—In 2016, nearly 38,000 poison exposure calls relating to children ages 5 and under were reported in Florida. Poisonings are preventable, and it's important that adults keep children safe from harmful exposure to medicines and chemicals around the home. During the 56th National Poison Prevention Week, celebrated March 19-25 this year, the Florida Department of Health in Marion County is sharing tips from the Florida Poison Information Center to improve home and community safety and help prevent poisonings.

- Install safety latches on cabinets and drawers
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and chemicals out of children's sight and reach
- Try to purchase products with child-proof packaging when available
- Keep products in their original packaging, and do not store them in food containers
- Always read product labels and follow directions exactly
- Do not call medicine "candy" when giving it to children

"Young children are especially vulnerable to poisoning because they tend to explore by putting things in their mouths. If that item is toxic, the consequences can be severe," said Florida Department of Health in Marion County Health Officer Erin Hess. "We encourage parents and caregivers to proactively look at their surroundings and think about potentially dangerous items a child could reach and move those items to an area the child does not have access to."

The top five poisons commonly ingested by children are: medications, household cleaners, cosmetics and personal care products, foreign bodies (money, batteries) and plants, berries and mushrooms. Florida's Poison Control Centers handled 146,664 incoming calls during 2016.

Poisonings can happen quickly, and it is important to know how to prevent poisoning and what to do in case you or your children consume a potentially dangerous product. Always keep the Poison Help Line at 1-800-222-1222 visibly posted in your home or classroom in case of an emergency. The Poison Help Line is free, confidential and multilingual and automatically directs the caller to the poison control center covering their geographic area. Download the [poison patrol checklist](#) to help identify and safely store household poisons to keep your family safe and healthy.

### About the Florida Department of Health

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