

Keeping Children Safe from Medications and Other Substances

You make decisions every day to keep your child safe. You feed them healthy food, bathe them, clothe them, and nurture them. You decide where they play, when they rest, and how they spend their time. You look out for and remove safety hazards. You know that your child loves to explore.

Young children learn about the world through all their senses. They touch things, put things in their mouth, and are always curious. A curious child will try to get into medicine cabinets, handbags, drawers, or cupboards. Keep this in mind as you set up safe places for your child to play, sleep, and spend time with your family.

Here are some ways to keep your home safe for your child:

- Store hazards where your child can't reach them. This includes cleaning supplies, medicines, and other substances (including alcohol).
- Keep all medications and substances in their original containers.
- Lock drawers or cupboards where you keep medications or other substances. Many medications, vitamins, supplements, and gummies look like candy to a child.
- If you keep medications or other substances in a purse or handbag, store it out of your child's reach. Ask anyone who's visiting your home to keep their bags out of reach as well.
- Make your home and car smoke free.
- Set up a safe place for your infant to sleep. Put them to sleep in a crib, bassinet or portable play yard with a firm, flat mattress and a fitted sheet. Keep blankets, pillows, and toys out of the crib.
- Avoid falling asleep with your infant on a couch or armchair or in your bed. Be aware if you use medications or substances that might make you extra sleepy.
- Be aware of how medications and substances like alcohol or marijuana affect you. Avoid using these substances when you're caring for your child.
- Make sure anyone taking care of your child knows not to use substances while they're with your child. It's OK to say something like, "Please don't drink or use other substances while you're caring for my child."
- Don't drive if you've consumed substances. Ask someone to drive who hasn't been using substances.

By doing these things, you can reduce risks to your child and keep them safe and healthy.

ACT FAST

Contact Poison Control if you think a child has swallowed something that might harm them.

Call: 800-222-1222
(toll-free)

Poison Control speaks many languages. They can tell you what to do. These services are available any time. Call **911** if a child has collapsed or isn't breathing.

Here are some other tips that can help you provide the best care for your child:

- Learn what to expect as your child develops. When you're prepared for your child to learn new skills, you can help them stay safe.
- Take care of yourself, and if you're feeling a lot of stress, ask for help. If you're in a crisis, you can call or text 988 to talk to someone who can help you.
- Develop and nurture relationships with people who respect, support, and appreciate you.
- Learn more about how substance use can affect a person's ability to keep children safe. Did you know that alcohol and other substances might slow your response time? An adult who hasn't used any substances can respond faster to a child who needs help.

