

# Tri County EMS Association Safety Guides



## Home Safety Tips

### Do We Know Which House Is Yours?

Don't forget maintenance and identification of your home. Add house numbers to your home if you don't already have them and repair broken or worn numbers, 4 to 6" recommended, reflective or at least contrasting colors to the house or trim, place nearest the street, and if possible near light. If an outside light is near, make sure the bulb isn't burnt out and clean the glass. For number plates provided by the town, be sure they are near the road, readable from both directions, and not obscured by plantings or weeds.

In an emergency situation knowing which home we are being summoned to is helpful when the numbers are in place and they are legible from the street.

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### The Scoop about Snow Shoveling

While shoveling snow can be good exercise, it can also be dangerous for optimistic shovelers who take on more than they can handle. The National Safety Council offers the following tips to help you get a handle on safe shoveling:

- Individuals over the age of 40, or those who are relatively inactive, should be especially careful.
- If you have a history of heart trouble, do not shovel without a doctor's permission.
- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow! Shoveling (like lifting weights) can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically; so pace yourself. Be sure to stretch out and warm up before taking on the task.
- Shovel only fresh snow. Freshly fallen, powdery snow is easier to shovel than the wet, packed-down variety.
- Push the snow as you shovel. It's easier on your back than lifting the snow out of the way.
- Don't pick up too much at once. Use a small shovel, or fill only one-fourth or one-half of a large one.
- Lift with your legs bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. By bending and "sitting" into the movement, you'll keep your spine upright and less stressed. Your shoulders, torso and thighs can do the work for you.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breath, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop immediately.
- Dress warmly. Remember that extremities, such as the nose, ears, hands and feet, need extra attention during winter's cold. Wear a turtleneck sweater, cap, scarf, face protection, mittens, wool socks and waterproof boots.

### Water Safety

Drowning claims the lives of over 4,000 people every year. Although all age groups are represented, children 0-4 have the highest death rate due to drowning.

In 1998, 500 children under the age of five drowned. Most drowning and near-drowning happen when a child falls into a pool or is left alone in the bathtub. The National Safety Council encourages adults to establish and adhere to strict water safety rules:

#### Safety Tips

- Never leave a child alone near water -- at the pool, the beach or in the tub -- a tragedy can occur in seconds. If you must leave, take your child with you.
- Always use approved personal flotation devices (life jackets.) The U.S. Coast Guard estimates nearly 9 of 10 drowning victims were not wearing one.
- Beware of neighborhood pools -- be it your own or your neighbors. Remove toys from in and around the pool when not in use. Toys can attract children to the pool.
- For pools, barriers can offer added protection against drowning. Power or manual covers will completely cover a pool and block access to the water, however, be sure to drain any standing water from the surface of the pool cover as a child can drown in very small amounts of water.
- Enroll children over age three in swimming lessons taught by qualified instructors. But keep in mind that lessons don't make your child "drown-proof."
- Older children risk drowning when they overestimate their swimming ability or underestimate the water depth.
- Teach your children these four key swimming rules:
  1. Always swim with a buddy.
  2. Don't dive into unknown bodies of water. Jump feet first to avoid hitting your head on a shallow bottom.
  3. Don't push or jump on others.
  4. Be prepared for an emergency.
- Never consume alcohol when operating a boat.
- Always have a first-aid kit and emergency phone contacts handy. Parents should be trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

## Holiday Season Safety

The National Safety Council offers these suggestions to help make your holiday season merry and safe.

### Decorations

Wear gloves while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." It can irritate your eyes and skin. A common substitute is non-flammable cotton. Both angel hair and cotton snow are flame retardant when used alone. However, if artificial snow is sprayed onto them, the dried combination will burn rapidly. When spraying artificial snow on windows or other surfaces, be sure to follow directions carefully. These sprays can irritate your lungs if you inhale them.

### Fireplaces

You should not try to burn evergreen or wreaths in the fireplace or in a wood stove to dispose of them. They are likely to flare out of control and send flames and smoke into the room. Also, do not burn wrapping paper in the fireplace because it often contains metallic materials which can be toxic if burned.

### Candles

Never use lighted candles near trees, boughs, curtains/drapes, or with any potentially flammable item.

### Toys and Gifts

Be especially careful when you choose toys for infants or small children. Be sure anything you give them is too big to get caught in the throat, nose or ears. Avoid toys with small parts that can be pulled or broken off. If you are giving toys to several children in one family, consider their age differences and the chances that younger children will want to play with older kids' toys.

### Older adults

Select gifts for older adults that are not heavy or awkward to handle. For persons with arthritis, make sure the gift does not require assembly and can be easily opened and closed. Choose books with large type for anyone with vision impairment.

### Plants

Small children may think that holiday plants look good enough to eat. But many plants can cause severe stomach problems. Plants to watch out for include: mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry, and amaryllis. Keep all of these plants out of children's reach.

### Food and Cooking

The holidays often mean preparing large meals for family and friends. Wash hands, utensils, sink, and anything else that has come in contact with raw poultry. Keep in mind that a stuffed bird takes longer to cook. For questions concerning holiday turkey preparation and cooking call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers in covered shallow containers (less than two inches deep) within two hours after cooking. Date the leftovers for future use.

### Alcohol, Parties and Driving

Being a smart party host or guest should include being sensible about alcoholic drinks. More than half of all traffic fatalities are alcohol-related. Use designated drivers, people who do not drink, to drive other guests home after a holiday party.

### Stress

The holiday season is one of the most stressful times of the year. You can't avoid stress completely, but you can give yourself some relief. Allow enough time to shop rather than hurry through stores and parking lots. Only plan to do a reasonable number of errands. When shopping, make several trips out to the car to drop off packages rather than trying to carry too many items. Take time out for yourself. Relax, read, or enjoy your favorite hobby at your own pace.

## How to Prevent Frostbite and Hypothermia

Prolonged exposure to low temperatures, wind or moisture - whether it be on a ski slope or in a stranded car - can result in cold-related illnesses such as frostbite and hypothermia. The National Safety Council offers these tips to help you spot and put a halt to these winter hazards.

### How to detect and treat cold-related illnesses

Frostbite is the most common injury resulting from exposure to severe cold. Superficial frostbite is characterized by white, waxy, or grayish-yellow patches on the affected areas. The skin feels cold and numb. The skin surface feels stiff but underlying tissue feels soft and pliable when depressed. Treat superficial frostbite by taking the victim inside immediately. Remove any constrictive clothing items that could impair circulation. If you notice signs of frostbite, immediately seek medical attention. Place dry, sterile gauze between toes and fingers to absorb moisture and to keep them from sticking together. Slightly elevate the affected part to reduce pain and swelling. If you are more than one hour from a medical facility and you have warm water, place the frostbitten part in the water (102 to 106 degrees Fahrenheit). If you do not have a thermometer, test the water first to see if it is warm, not hot. Rewarming usually takes 20 to 40 minutes or until tissues soften.

Deep frostbite usually affects the feet or hands and is characterized by waxy, pale, solid skin. Blisters may appear. Treat deep frostbite by moving the victim indoors and immediately seek medical attention.

**Hypothermia** occurs when the body's temperature drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Symptoms of this condition include change in mental status, uncontrollable shivering, cool abdomen and a low core body temperature. Severe hypothermia may produce rigid muscles, dark and puffy skin, irregular heart and respiratory rates, and unconsciousness. Treat hypothermia by protecting the victim from further heat loss and calling for immediate medical attention. Get the victim out of the cold. Add insulation such as blankets, pillows, towels or newspapers beneath and around the victim. Be sure to cover the victim's head. Replace wet clothing with dry clothing. Handle the victim gently because rough handling can cause cardiac arrest. Keep the victim in a horizontal (flat) position. Give artificial respiration or CPR (if you are trained) as necessary.

#### **How to prevent cold-related illnesses**

Avoid frostbite and hypothermia when you are exposed to cold temperatures by wearing layered clothing, eating a well-balanced diet, and drinking warm, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free liquids to maintain fluid levels.

Avoid becoming wet, as wet clothing loses 90 percent of its insulating value.

## **Use Fireworks Safely**

For Americans, summer means picnics, barbecues, parades, fireworks displays and other fun activities. Unfortunately, summer holidays are also identified with backyard firecrackers, bottle rockets, cherry bombs and other dangerous explosives.

Despite efforts to educate people about the hazards of home fireworks, the problem persists. In 2000 (most recent available figures), 10 people were killed and 11,000 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms for fireworks-related injuries.

Almost half of the injuries happen to children 15 and younger. Almost two-thirds of the victims are male. Firecrackers, bottle rockets and sparklers cause most fireworks injuries, with firecrackers accounting for the 30 percent of the injuries. Even seemingly harmless sparklers burn at temperatures as high as 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit and can cause disfiguring burns. Most injuries result from misuse, including holding firecrackers too long, picking up lighted fireworks and having fireworks explode near a bystander. Common injuries include second- and third-degree burns, partial or total loss of sight, lacerations and fractures.

The National Safety Council strongly urges people to avoid all home fireworks. Some people, however, will still conduct backyard fireworks displays despite laws against their use and the great danger to themselves and others. For those people who insist on putting themselves at risk, the National Safety Council reluctantly offers the following suggestions to minimize the chance of injuries from fireworks to users and bystanders:

- Always light fireworks outdoors in a clear area away from onlookers, houses and flammable materials.
- Light one device at a time; maintain a safe distance after lighting the devices.
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks; douse and soak them with water and discard them safely.
- Never allow young children to handle fireworks.
- Older children should use fireworks only under close adult supervision.
- Do not allow any running or horseplay while fireworks are being used.
- Never ignite devices in a container.
- Always store fireworks in a dry, cool place and avoid rough handling that might damage the fuse or handles.

As a preventive measure, keep a bucket of water nearby when conducting a home display. Use the water to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off immediately. Cool water should be applied to burns. If a person suffers a serious injury, get immediate medical assistance. Above all -- the best way to have a blast this summer, without endangering yourself or others, is to watch and safely enjoy a public fireworks display conducted by professionals.

#### **How to Lift and Carry Safely**

Lifting and carrying are power jobs -- when you lift and carry the wrong way, you can damage your back. Back injuries are the most common type of injury in the workplace, causing approximately 900,000 disabling injuries in 1995. Over half of these injuries are from lifting.

Back injuries may be difficult to treat and may have lengthy and expensive rehabilitation times.

Whether you are lifting at home or at work, make an effort to take care of your back. The National Safety Council recommends a number of tips to prevent unintentional injuries and keep your back strong and healthy.

#### **Power warm-up**

You will work better if you start each day with slow stretches. These warm-ups let you ease comfortably into your workday and help you avoid injuries.

#### **Leg and back warm-up**

- Prop one foot on a chair or a stool for support.
- Take a deep breath.
- Ease forward slowly -- keep your back slightly curved.
- Blow slowly outward as you ease forward to a seven count.
- Repeat seven times. Switch and do the same with the other foot.

#### **Backbend**

- Stand with your feet about 12 inches apart.
- Support the small of your back with your hands.
- Hold your stomach in firmly and take a deep breath.
- Arch backward -- bend your head and neck as you go, blowing air slowly out for seven counts. Repeat seven times.

#### Power lifting tips

- Protect your hands and feet by wearing safety gear.
- Size up the load -- tip it on its side to see if you can carry it comfortably. Get help if the load is too big or bulky for one person. Check for nails, splinters, rough strapping and sharp edges.
- Lift it right -- make sure your footing is solid. Keep your back straight, with no curving or slouching. Center your body over your feet, get a good grip on the object and pull it close to you. Pull your stomach in firmly. Lift with your legs, not your back; if you need to turn, move your feet and don't twist your back.

#### Tough lifting jobs

**Oversized loads** -- do not try to carry a big load alone; ask for help. Work as a team by lifting, walking and lowering the load together. Let one person call the shots and direct the lift. Use proper mechanical devices for heavy loads.

**High loads** -- use a step stool or a sturdy ladder to reach loads that are above your shoulders. Get as close to the load as you can and slide the load toward you. Do all the work with your arms and legs, not your back.

**Low loads** -- loads that are under racks and cabinets need extra care. Pull the load toward you, then try to support it on one knee before you lift. Use your legs to power the lift.

**Always** ... use your stomach as a low back support by pulling it in during lifting.

**Remember** ... a strong, healthy, powerful back is vital to your job. It also helps you enjoy life. Take pains to avoid injuries by making it a full-time job to take care of your back!

## Baby-proofing Your Home

Babies learn quickly in their first year. For new parents, it's a pleasant surprise to see how soon they begin moving and exploring. But turn your back for a moment, and the infant who was squirming helplessly on a blanket is suddenly crawling across the room at high speeds.

Children are naturally curious. Tasting, touching and feeling are how infants and toddlers learn about the world around them. Take a moment to look at your surroundings from a youngster's point of view. Then make any necessary adjustments to babyproof your home.

Mechanical suffocation and suffocation by ingested objects cause the most home fatalities to children 0-4 years of age.

Drownings and home fires also contribute to the death of young children.

#### Suffocation and Choking

- Infants, when placed on an adult bed of any kind, can roll into the space between the wall and the mattress and suffocate. Exercise caution if sleeping in the same bed with an infant. It is possible for an infant to become wedged between your body and the mattress and suffocate. Infants should never be placed on top of soft surfaces like sofas, large soft toys, sofa cushions, pillows, water beds or on top of blankets, quilts or comforters.
- Babies should sleep on their backs.
- Crib bars should be no more than 2 3/8 inches apart to prevent infants from getting their heads stuck between them. Cribs manufactured after 1974 must meet this and other strict safety standards.
- The crib mattress must fit tightly so there are no gaps for an infant to fall into. Keep the crib clear of plastic sheets, pillows and large stuffed animals or toys. These can be suffocation hazards.
- Keep toys with long strings or cords away from infants and young children. A cord can become wrapped around an infant's neck and cause strangulation. Toys with long strings, cords, loops or ribbons should never be hung in cribs or playpens. Similarly, pacifiers should never be attached to strings or ribbons around the baby's neck.
- Place an infant or child's bed away from any windows. Check window coverings for potentially hazardous pull cords.
- Use child safety gates at the top and bottom of all staircases and be sure they're installed correctly. Avoid accordion style safety gates with large openings that children could fit their heads through.
- Choking is a common cause of unintentional death in children under the age of 1. Avoid all foods that could lodge in a child's throat. Some examples include popcorn, grapes, foods with pits, raisins, nuts, hard candies, raw vegetables, and small pieces of hotdogs.
- Never let children of any age eat or suck on anything, such as hard candy, while lying down.
- Keep floors, tables and cabinet tops free of small objects that could be swallowed. Such objects include coins, button-sized batteries, rings, nails, tacks and broken or deflated balloons.

#### Falls and Burns

- A mixer faucet on the basin, tub and shower will prevent scalds. Set your hot water thermostat for 120° F. A baby's bath water should be 100° F. Always check bath water temperature with your wrist or elbow before putting a baby in to bathe. Don't allow children in a whirlpool, Jacuzzi or hot tub. Their bodies are more sensitive to hot water.

- Teach youngsters that matches are tools for adults, not toys. Adults should never ignite lighters or matches in front of children. Store matches in a fire-resistant container out of the reach of youngsters.
- Do not smoke, use matches or drink hot beverages while holding an infant. Don't leave burning cigarettes unattended.
- Remember that radiators, heating vents, space heaters, fireplaces, stoves and hotwater taps are not always hot. Children can touch them once safely and the next time receive a severe burn.
- Keep electrical cords and wires out of the way so toddlers can't pull, trip or chew on them. Cover wall outlets with safety caps.

#### Drowning

- Never leave a child unsupervised in the bathtub. If you must leave the room for a telephone call or to answer the door, wrap the child in a towel and take him or her with you. Don't leave a small child alone with any container of liquid, including wading pools, scrub buckets, and toilets.
- A swimming pool drowning could also be called a "silent death" as there is rarely a splash or cry for help to alert parents to the problem. The typical drowning victim is a boy between 1 and 3 years old who is thought not to be in the pool area at the time of the incident.
  - Fence in the pool completely. Doors leading to the pool area should be self closing and self-latching or equipped with exit alarms and should never be propped open.
  - Never take your eyes off children when they are in or near any body of water, not even for a second. Don't rely on inflatable devices, such as inner tubes, water wings, inflatable mattresses and toys or other similar objects to keep a youngster afloat. Keep toys, tricycle and other playthings away from the pool area. A toddler near the water could unexpectedly fall in.
  - All pool owners and their families are encouraged to seek training in swimming, lifesaving, first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

If it seems that there is a lot to do before that new bundle of joy comes home -- you are correct. However, simple safety checks can help ensure that you and baby will have many happy and healthy years together.

## Crib Safety Tips

#### Crib Design:

- Dispose of antique cribs with decorative cutout, corner posts or lead paint.
- The space between the slats should be no more than 2-3/8 inches apart to prevent infants from getting their head stuck between them. Cribs manufactured after 1974 must meet this and other strict safety standards.
- The corner posts should be the same height as the end panels or less than 1/16 of an inch higher than the end panels.
- No cut-out areas on the headboard or footboard so a baby's head cannot get trapped.
- The top rails of crib sides, in their raised position, should be at least 26 inches above the top of the mattress support at its lowest position.
- As soon as the child can pull himself to a standing position, set and keep the mattress at its lowest position. Stop using the crib once the height of the top rails is less than three-fourths of the child's height.

#### Mattress:

- The mattress should fit snugly next to the crib so that there is no gap. If two adult fingers can be placed between the mattress and the crib, the mattress should be immediately replaced.
- Do not use plastic packaging materials, such as dry cleaning bags, as mattress covers. Plastic film can cling to children's faces and should never be in or near the crib.
- Put your baby to sleep on his or her back or side in a crib with a firm, flat mattress and no soft bedding underneath. Talk to your pediatrician about which sleeping position is best for you child.

#### Crib Hardware:

- The drop side(s) of the crib should require two distinct actions or a minimum force of ten pounds with one action to release the latch or the locks to prevent accidental release by the child.
- The crib hardware should be checked for disengaged, broken, bent or loose pieces. Special checks should be made of the mattress support hangers and brackets so they cannot drop. The hardware and the crib should be smooth and free of sharp edges, points and rough surfaces.

#### Crib Accessories:

- Bumper pads should cover the entire inside perimeter of the crib and tie or snap in place. Bumper pads should have at least six straps or ties and any excess length of straps or ties should be cut off. Bumper pads should never be used in lieu of proper spacing between the slats and should be removed from the crib as soon as the child can pull himself to a standing position.
- Teething rails that are damaged should be fixed, replaced or removed immediately.
- To prevent possible entanglement, mobiles and crib gyms, which are meant to be hung over or across the crib, should be removed when the child is five months old or when he begins to push up onto hands and knees or can pull himself up.

- Keep the crib clear of plastic sheets, pillows, and large stuffed animals or toys. These can be suffocation hazards or can enable youngsters to climb out of the crib.
- Any cloth or vinyl items that are loose or torn should be replaced or repaired immediately.

#### **Crib Environment:**

- Do not place crib next to a window. Drapery and blind cords pose an entanglement hazard and window screens are not intended to keep a child in, only insects out.
- Install smoke detectors. Follow the manufacturer's directions for placement. Check at least once a month to make sure battery and smoke detector are in good working condition.
- Lead is a health hazard, especially to young children. It can be found in dust and soil off busy roadways, in old paint on walls, toys and furniture and sometimes in paint on new imported items. If you think your child has taken in leaded paint or soil, or you need help with identifying or removing lead paint, call the National Safety Council's National Lead Information Center at 800-424-5323.

## **Preventing Slips and Falls in the Home**

In 1998, falls in the home and community caused or led to 15,900 deaths. All age groups are vulnerable, but older adults are most at risk. In fact 80% of those receiving fatal injury are over the age of 65. Falls continue to be the major reason for injury-related death, injury and hospital admission for older adults.

#### **Follow these tips to prevent slips and falls in your home:**

- Keep the floor clear. Reduce clutter and safely tuck telephone and electrical cords out of walkways.
- Keep the floor clean. Clean up grease, water and other liquids immediately. Don't wax floors.
- Use non-skid throw rugs to reduce your chance of slipping on linoleum.
- Install handrails in stairways. Have grab bars in the bathroom (by toilets and in tub/shower.)
- Make sure living areas are well lit. We can all trip and fall in the dark.
- Be aware that climbing and reaching high places will increase your chance of a fall. Use a sturdy step stool with hand rails when these tasks are necessary.
- Follow medication dosage closely. Using medication incorrectly may lead to dizziness, weakness and other side effects. These can all lead to a dangerous fall.

## **How to Prevent Poisoning in Your Home**

As consumers, we buy more than a quarter of a million different household products that are used in and around the home for medication, cleaning, cosmetic purposes, exterminating insects, and killing weeds. These items are valuable in the home and for yard maintenance, but misuse, especially when products are used in inappropriate applications or quantities, can cause illness, injury and even death.

Each year more than 6,000 people die and an estimated 300,000 suffer disabling illnesses as a result of unintentional poisoning by solid and liquid substances. Unintentional poisoning can happen to anyone, at any time, in any situation. Home unintentional poisoning, however, can be prevented. While child-resistant packaging has greatly reduced the number of fatalities among children under five years of age, parents, grandparents, and other caregivers must still be cautious. Following label directions for all products, including medication dosages, and proper storage of potentially toxic products are important precautions to heed.

#### **Statistics**

- Poisonings from solids and liquids such as drugs, medicines, poisonous houseplants, cleaning products, and pesticides caused 6,300 deaths in the home in 1998 alone.
- An additional 500 deaths in the home in 1998 were due to poisonings from gases and vapors such as carbon monoxide.
- These deaths are not all among children. Another age group at risk is adults age 25 through 44. Many adults are unintentionally poisoned when they do not follow label directions on medications or household chemicals.

You can keep yourself and family members safer by being aware of potential hazards and observing these suggestions from the National Safety Council on ways to poison-proof your home.

#### **Bathroom**

- Have a "child-proof" cabinet that locks. Even if your medicine cabinet is "high up," youngsters are inquisitive and avid climbers. They can easily reach a cabinet by climbing from the toilet (or other convenient object) to the sink and thus reach into the cabinet.
- Use child-resistant caps and keep medication lids tightly closed. A child-resistant cap is meaningless if not properly fastened after each use.
- Never take medication in front of a child, or refer to pills as candy. Kids often mimic adults. Also, something that tastes awful to an adult may not faze a small child.
- Always follow the recommended dosage set forth by your doctor for all medications.
- Some mouthwashes contain enough alcohol to poison small children. Consider alternative products.
- Some toilet bowl cleansers are dangerously caustic and capable of burning tissue if ingested.

#### **Bedroom**

- Mothballs and crystals should be hung in containers. If such products are used in closets or chests, they should be out of the reach of toddlers.
- Keep personal care items such as hair spray, cologne, perfumes, nail polish remover, nail glue remover, and astringents where children can't get into them.

#### **Living Room**

- People who visit may carry medications in coat pockets, jackets, and purses, all of which are perfect hunting grounds for a curious child. Hang garments and store purses where children are not likely to get at them.
- Children may be exposed to different lead sources in your home. Small children may chew on window sills, eat paint chips, or suck on their hands or toys, exposing themselves to lead dust. Lead poisoning can cause serious medical problems, especially in young children. Be sure your home is lead safe.

#### **Kitchen**

- Check under the sink and in cabinets. Look for stored products that could be hazardous when accessible to young children. These could include such items as bleaching agents, rust removers, drain cleaners, ammonia, oven cleaners, detergents, furniture polish, floor wax, metal polish, wax remover, and wall/floor/toilet bowl cleaners. Even food extracts, such as vanilla and almond, are potential poisons. If products cannot be moved, install safety latches on cupboard doors to keep inquisitive youngsters out.
- Cleaning compounds and foods should never be stored together.
- Keep all substances in their original containers. Using beverage bottles or cans for storing cleaning fluids, liquid floor wax, and other household mixtures is very hazardous. Children, and even adults, might mistake the contents for the original beverage. Also, labels on original containers give important usage and safety information.
- Keep potentially hazardous cleaning compounds capped. Do not leave an uncapped container unattended even "just a minute" if toddlers are present.

#### **Additional Precautions**

- Keep the numbers of your local poison control center (or national toll-free number, 800-222-1222) or family doctor posted near the telephone. Have the original container and its label when you call.
- Keep syrup of ipecac available but use only when instructed to by a doctor or poison control center.
- Use safety latches or combination locks to prevent curious children from getting into cabinets and drawers. Don't let children watch you open them. Kids learn fast.
- Many poisonings of youngsters happen when the household routine has been interrupted. Examples of such changes include: when a parent is ill; when a family is moving; when a family is on a trip; when there is a guest in the home; when there is family tension; when seasonal products are in use. In addition, hungry or tired children are prone to putting the first available object they find into their mouths.
- Throw out unneeded or expired medicines (OTC and prescriptions). Look for the expiration date. Out-of-date medications may be ineffective and/or dangerous.
- For handling poisonings and other emergencies, everyone should be trained in first aid.

#### **Especially for Older Adults**

- Request medicine labels be printed in larger type.
- If one type of child-restraint closure is difficult to use, ask your pharmacist for a different kind (especially if there are young children around).
- Make sure you are taking the medicine you intended; turn on the lights and double-check the label, especially when you are sleepy or sick.
- Avoid dosage errors - use dosage containers indicating day of week and/or time of day; don't leave it to memory.
- If you are taking two or more medications (prescription or OTC), be sure to check with your pharmacist to avoid unexpected drug interactions.
- Consider a dedicated medicine storage area - even if there are no kids in the house.

#### **Pets are Susceptible, Too!**

- Poisonous anti-freeze tastes sweet to dogs and cats - clean up spills and leaks immediately and store carefully.
- Avoid feeding pets human food - chocolate can poison and kill a dog. Onions are potentially harmful. Pets are healthier eating food specially formulated for what they need.
- Don't spray or store cleaning or pesticide products near pet food or water dishes.
- Make sure animals can't get at bait products while they are in use.
- In the event of a spill, be sure to keep animals out of the area until it is cleaned up.
- Don't forget about wildlife. Spraying products on a windy day can carry the product into the water supply for wild animals.