



A Plan For Senior Care's Guide To Protecting Seniors From Accidental Poisoning

According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, each year more than 2 million poisonings are reported with 90% happening at home. Most poisonings that prove fatal occur among adults, many of them seniors with dementia.

Many household items can be dangerous, such as medications, cleaning products, pesticides, paints, cosmetics, toiletries, alcohol, cigarettes, gardening products, and some plants.



What Is Accidental Poisoning?

Accidental poisoning involves a person, accidentally poisoning themselves without wanting to cause harm to their body. Poisoning can occur from swallowing, touching or breathing a substance.

Elderly are at risk when living alone or with someone. The senior may have confusion, dementia or poor eyesight and are not aware of what they are doing. Often, do not call for immediate medical care.

What Are The Symptoms?

Symptoms depend on what the person has swallowed, touched or inhaled, the amount and their general health. Watch for ANY abnormal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, burns, damage inside the mouth and Esophagus, seizures, trouble breathing, cardiac arrest or unconsciousness.

Chemicals such as drain openers, toilet cleaners, rust removers, and oven cleaners can burn the skin. Many liquid products made from petroleum, such as gasoline, kerosene, & charcoal lighter fluid are poisonous. If these items are swallowed, they can easily get into the lungs. Even a small amount can cause breathing problems. Pesticides (pest killers) can be absorbed through the skin or inhaled and are extremely poisonous.

How To Keep Your Senior Safe?

- Put all medicines, cleaners, and chemicals away after using. Keep all in a safe and or secured place such as a locked cabinet.
- Keep all household products, cleaning supplies and chemicals in their original bottles. Never store in containers used for food.
- Never mix chemicals. Sometimes mixing chemicals can result in deadly combinations. For example, mixing bleach and ammonia can create toxic gases.
- Dispose of unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs and over the counter drugs, vitamins, and supplements. Mix them with kitty litter or coffee grounds before throwing them out.
- Remove poisonous plants the home.

Who to Call for Help?

If an accidental poisoning *does* occur, call 911. Poison Control Centers national hotline is 1-800-222-1222

If your loved one is struggling at home to care for her/himself and you would like to explore senior care and housing options, please give us a call today. A Plan For Senior Care will be happy to create a personalized care plan for your loved one.