



Poisoning Prevention for Older Adults



Seniors are at special risk for poisoning. Each year in Virginia, hundreds of seniors spend time in the hospital —and even die—because of problems using medicines and household products. As we get older, we often need more medicines. It's harder for our bodies to process drugs and chemicals. It's harder to read labels. It's easier to make mistakes.

TIPS

Poison Prevention

- ✓ Read the label before taking medicine or using a household product. Turn on the light and put on your glasses if you need to read.
- ✓ Take medicines exactly as your doctor orders. Your pharmacist or other health care provider can help you figure out the best way to keep your drugs organized.
- ✓ ONLY take medicine prescribed for you! If possible, have all prescriptions filled by the same pharmacy.
- ✓ Ask your pharmacist before taking a new drug to avoid drug interactions.
- ✓ Store food and household products in different areas. It's easy to make a mistake.
- ✓ Keep household products in their original containers.
- ✓ Do NOT mix household products together. You could make a poisonous gas.
- ✓ Install carbon monoxide alarms.
- ✓ Put the Poison Center phone number on or near every phone: 1-800-222-1222.

First Aid for Poisoning

- ✓ Splashed in the eyes? Rinse with water for 15 minutes.
- ✓ Spilled on the skin? Rinse with water for 15 minutes.
- ✓ Breathed in a poison? Get to fresh air.
- ✓ Swallowed a household product? Drink several swallows of water or milk.
- ✓ **Call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.**
- ✓ **In case of poisoning: Call the poison center right away! Experts will tell you exactly what to do. Call 1-800-222-1222, 24 hours a day.**

911 If you or someone you know is experiencing a life threatening injury or act of violence, please dial 911 immediately.

If you would like more information on injury and violence prevention education and information, call 1-800-732-8333 or email ivp@vdh.virginia.gov