



As the weather warms and we spend more time outside, families face new risks. Here are some hints to avoid poisonings that occur most often in summer:



Food Poisoning

- Always wash hands and counters before preparing food. Use clean utensils for cooking and serving.
- Store food at the proper temperatures. Refrigerated foods cannot be left out at temperatures above 40 degrees F (5 degrees C). The following foods, and others, can quickly spoil and become unsafe: party platters, meat, poultry, seafood, dairy products, eggs, mayonnaise, and cooked vegetables.
- Wash hands with hot, soapy water after handling raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Wash cutting boards, utensils, and dishes after use with these foods.
- Use a thermometer when cooking and reheating foods. That will help you to know when they are done and safe to eat.
- Do not let food sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Watch for signs of food poisoning. They include fever, headache, diarrhea, stomach pains, nausea, and vomiting.



Insect Bites

- Be alert to insects that may bite or sting. After a sting, the site will show redness and swelling. It may be itchy and painful. Be careful around bees, wasps, hornets, and yellow jackets.
- Some people are allergic to insect stings. To these people, a sting may cause serious problems and even death. Go to a hospital right away if you are stung and have any of these signs: hives, dizziness, breathing trouble, or swelling around eyes and mouth.



Snake Bites

- If a poisonous snake bites you or someone you know, call Poison Help (1-800-222-1222) right away.
- The experts at your poison center will determine if the snake is poisonous. They will tell you what signs to watch for and what to do.
- If the snake is not poisonous, you will need to wash the wound. You also may need a tetanus booster shot. Check with your doctor to find out.



Spider Bites

- Most spider and tick bites do not cause harm. But, there are some spiders that can cause illness in some people. Two common spiders that can harm you are the female black widow and the brown recluse. A bite from one of these spiders can cause serious problems in a child, a senior, or a person in poor health. But these bites rarely cause death.
- The female black widow is a black, shiny spider. It has a red or orange hourglass shape on its underside. Within 2 hours after being bitten by the female, you may feel stomach pain, dizziness, and muscle stiffness. You may have trouble breathing.
- The brown recluse is a yellowish-tan to dark brown spider. It has a small body and long legs. The brown recluse has a dark violin shape on its body. Within 36 hours after being bitten, you may see or feel signs of poisoning. You may feel restless. You may have fever, chills, nausea, weakness, a rash, or joint pain. A blister or wound may develop at the bite site. The wound may be shaped like a bull's eye (a blister with rings around). If the wound worsens, see a doctor. Most likely you will not need antibiotics. States known to be home to the Brown Recluse are AL, AR, FL, GA, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MO, MS, NC, NE, NM, OH, OK, SC, TN, TX.



Plants

- If you are allergic to poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac, touching it can cause blisters on your skin.
- Be sure that everyone in your family can identify these plants. Remember, “leaves of three, let it be.”
- If someone touches poison ivy, poison sumac, or poison oak rinse right away with plenty of running water for at least 5 minutes.
- Unless you are a plant expert, do not pick your own foods to eat in the wild.
- Poison hemlock and water hemlock can be fatal to people. Their roots, or tubers, can look like wild carrots or parsnips.

Common Poisonous Plants

Common Name	Botanical Name
Azalea.rhododendron	Rhododendro
Caladium	Caladium
Castor bean	Ricinis communis
Daffodil	Narcissus
Deadly nightshade	Atropa belladonna
Dumbcane	Dieffenbachia
Elephant Ear	Colocasia esculenta
Foxglove	Digitalis purpurea
Holly	Illex
Iris	Iris
Jerusalem cherry	Solanum pseudocapsicum
Jimson weed	Datura stramonium
Lantana	Lantana camara
Lily-of-the-valley	Convallaria majalis
Mayapple	Podophyllum peltatum
Mistletoe	Viscum album
American Mistletoe	Phoradendron flavescens
Morning glory	Ipomoea
Mountain laurel	Kalmia latifolia
Mushrooms	Assorted
Nightshade	Salanum spp.
Oleander	Nerium oleander
Peacelily	Spathiphyllum
Philodendron	Philodendron
Pokeweed	Phytolacca americana
Pothos	Epipremnum aureum
Yew	Taxus

Call your poison center to find out about plants in your area.



Mushrooms

- Only experts can tell poisonous mushrooms from safe mushrooms.
- Poisonous mushrooms, called “death caps,” often grow in yards and parks.
- Eating even a few bites of certain mushrooms can cause liver damage that can kill you.



Alcoholic Drinks and Products

- Alcohol can be a deadly poison for children. That’s because they are small and their livers are not fully developed. All of the following are dangerous for children: beer, wine, mixed drinks, other alcoholic beverages, facial cleaners, and mouthwash.
- Alcohol will make a child sleepy.
- The child can develop low blood sugar. This can lead to seizures, coma, and death.
- Be careful not to leave alcoholic drinks where children can reach them. Be alert at parties and gatherings. Children may find cups containing leftover alcohol within their reach.



Insect Spray or Lotion

- Be sure to check the label on any insect repellent. Most contain DEET, which can harm children if used improperly or in large amounts.
- Do not allow children to apply repellent to themselves. Have an adult do this for them. When using repellent on a child, put a little on your own hands, then rub them on your child. Avoid the eyes and mouth. Use only a little around the ears.
- Use separate products when there is a need for insect spray and sunscreen. Do not use sunscreen that contains DEET. Repeatedly applying a product with DEET can increase the risk of harmful effects. Always follow the instructions on the label.
- For most products, after returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water. Some labels give different advice. Check the label of the product you are using.