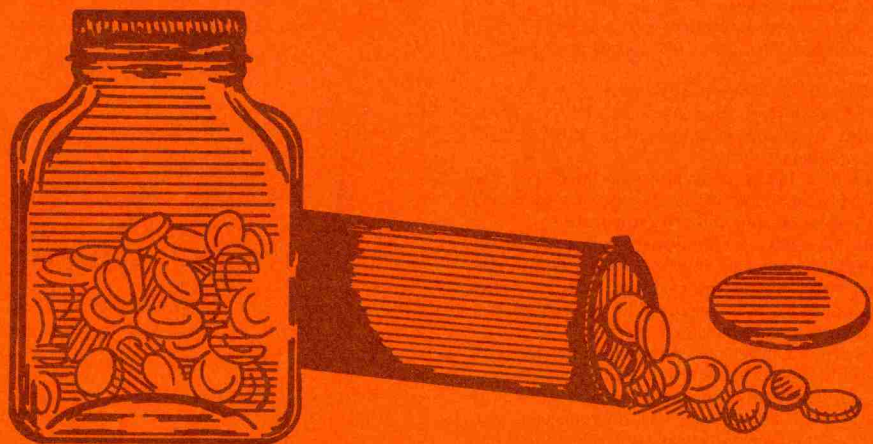


Safety With Medicines and Household Chemicals ❧



Safety With Medicines and Household Chemicals



Introduction

This unit is concerned with what might be broadly classified as (1) household chemicals, including cleaning agents, caustic compounds, insect killers and repellents, deodorants, body care and grooming products, etc., and (2) medicines, including both the prescription and non-prescription types.

The U. S. Consumer Products Safety Commission has ranked cleaning agents and caustic compounds Number 4 in a listing of 369 products, based on the frequency and severity of injuries reported to hospital emergency rooms.

Poisoning is the most needless and easily prevented of all accidents. Yet each year an estimated 200,000 persons are disabled and another 1,600 die from poisoning.

An estimated 80 percent of all poisonings take place in the home. Aspirin is the chief poisoner, and children are most often the victims.

The types of injuries most commonly caused by cleaning agents, caustic compounds and medicines are: (1) chemical burns, (2) poisonings, and (3) inhalation of dangerous fumes.

Burns are usually associated with splashing of the product, failure to use protective gloves, and hand to eye contact.

Poisonings are most frequently caused by storing the product where children may get to it, and by storing the product in unapproved, poorly marked, or non-marked containers.

Inhalation of fumes is usually associated with the mixing of products, and excessive exposure in poorly ventilated areas, during and after application.

Poisons may have an immediate noticeable effect on the person or persons involved. There is also evidence that vital body organs (kidneys, liver, etc.) may be affected and this goes unnoticed by the victim until serious and permanent damage is done.

Shelves at the market place are today crowded with non-prescription products which are advertised to cure all your ills. These products serve a useful purpose if intelligently used. The primary hazards connected with these are: (1) indiscriminate use and (2) overdose or prolonged use.

Objective

The objective of this project is to create an awareness of the danger involved with the use of these products, thereby reducing or eliminating accidents and injuries. This objective may be reached by:

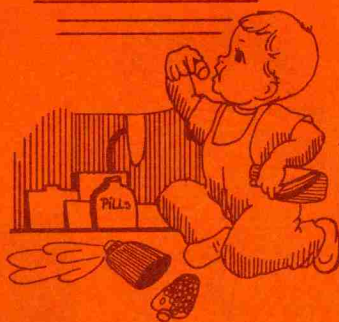
- (1) Educating the user as to the potential dangers involved.
- (2) Planning and putting into practice a safety program in the home which provides for the proper selection, handling, storage and disposal of the products.
- (3) Organizing and promoting a community safety program.

Procedure

The subject matter contained in this unit is in the form of True-False statements. You should be able to answer all of the statements correctly upon completion of the unit. Begin your study by reading through the statements. How many can you answer correctly? You may now begin to involve other members of your club, your family and the many resource people in the community.

Community involvement should be easy. Doctors, nurses, druggists, city or county health personnel, the local chapter of the American Red Cross, insurance personnel and a host of other people may be used.

Pursue your study until action is taken to make your home and community a safer place to live.



Statements

True False

1. Aspirin bottles are required by a Federal Food and Drug Act to have child-restraint caps. _____
2. It is impossible for a child to remove the child-restraint caps. _____
3. Aspirin is the chief poisoner in the home, and children usually are the victims. _____
4. Since aspirin is easily recognized, it is not necessary to properly label the bottle or container. _____
5. Medicines should never be stored in the food preparation area. _____
6. In case of poisoning one should immediately call the doctor or the nearest poison control center. _____
7. In case of poisoning one should immediately dispose of the container and its contents. _____
8. A victim of poisoning, if conscious and not having convulsions, should be given as much juice, water, or milk as possible. _____
9. If a person has swallowed petroleum products or corrosive poisons he or she should be made to vomit as soon as possible. _____
10. Unused prescription medicines should be stored for future use by some member of the family. _____
11. There is no danger in non-prescription drugs (those sold from the store shelves) or else they would not be there. _____
12. Products which are poisonous can be found in most homes in the medicine cabinet, under the kitchen sink, in the garage, and even on the bedroom dresser. _____
13. Products which are harmful or fatal if swallowed are boldly marked "Poison" or with the "Cross and Skull." _____
14. Ammonia and bleaching products, when mixed, may give off deadly chlorine gas. _____
15. Mothballs are poisonous and, if swallowed, may kill. _____
16. Frequently used medicines should be carried in a lady's purse. _____
17. Toys, cribs and playpens should be painted with lead-based paints. _____
18. Dry cleaning fluids should be used out of doors or in well-ventilated places. _____
19. Waxes, shoe polish, cosmetics, cleansers, detergents, and bleaches should be thought of as poisons. _____
20. Household cleaners should never be mixed. _____

21. The label on medicines and household products should be carefully read before using the contents. _____
22. Medicines should never be taken in the dark. _____
23. Rubber gloves should be used when using lye or other caustic products. _____
24. Insecticides and rat poisons may be safely stored on food shelves and with pots and pans if in the original containers. _____

Suggested Activities

1. Conduct a hazard hunt in your home. How many hazards did you find?
2. Inventory all medicines and chemical compounds in the home. Dispose of those unused and out of date.
3. Provide safe (locked if small children are present) storage facilities for all medicines and chemicals.
4. See that all materials are properly and clearly labeled.
5. Secure and post the names and telephone numbers of persons and places to call in case of an emergency.
6. Plan and arrange for doctors, druggists, Red Cross personnel and others to speak to your club.
7. Familiarize yourself with and know the meaning of labels found on containers.
8. Publicize your activities through local papers, radio and television.
9. Give talks before civic groups.
10. Prepare posters and exhibits for display in store windows and other suitable places.
11. Enlist other 4-H members in the safety project.

Suggestions for Completing This Project

1. Study and answer correctly the True-False statements.
2. Conduct a hazard hunt in your home and correct or remove those conditions which are potential dangers. Complete at least numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the suggested activities.
3. Write a one-page story on the subject.
4. Complete **My 4-H Plan, 4H R-1-80** and turn everything in to your 4-H leader or Extension agent by the date requested.

Resource Material

- (1) *Safety For All Seasons. A Year-Round Guide To Better Living for 4-H Youth and Leaders.* 4-H Service Department, 901 North Main Street, Paris, Illinois 61944.
- (2) *Safety Is No Accident.* Publication 425. Extension Service Mississippi State University.
- (3) *Making Your Home Safe.* 4-H Bulletin 191C. Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University.



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