



They Put Everything in Their Mouth! by Jack Smith of Infant House

When consulting with new parents, we explain that it is their baby's job to put everything into their mouths. A baby's mouth has more nerve endings than any other part of their body, so if they want to find out what something tastes or feels like, it goes in their mouth. Parents do not want their baby putting anything into their mouths that is not given to them by a loving caregiver..

With some common sense precautions you can avoid the unintentional poisoning of your child:

1. Store household products safely
 - Store these items out of reach of children
 - **Install childproof latches on cabinet doors and drawers.** Lock all of them below the counter tops, especially in the kitchen and bathrooms. In addition to the poisoning hazard, Mom's make-up drawer is one of the **most expensive drawers in the house**, so this may save you some expense from damaged products as well.
2. Use products safely
 - Buy products that are packaged in childproof containers, when appropriate.
 - Reclose childproof packaging correctly.
3. Be cautious with medicine
 - Never refer to medicine as candy. **A handful of children's vitamins with iron are toxic to a small child.**
 - Do not take medicine in front of your children. Children emulate what their parents do, both good and bad.
4. Install Carbon monoxide detectors
 - **CO is a silent killer**, it is an odorless, colorless gas emitted by fireplaces and gas appliances.
 - The recommendation is to have one CO detector on each level of the home.

As a professional baby proofer, I recommend that the **Poison Control Center phone number, 1-800-222-1222**, be posted by the home telephone, and **programmed into each caregiver's mobile phone**. In the event that the child swallows a foreign substance, the last thing you want to do is find yourself scrambling for a phone number. Do not hesitate to call, the people are friendly, professional, and they do not make you feel stupid.

When my twins were born we kept syrup of ipecac in the home, which was recommended by American Academy of Pediatrics to induce vomiting in the event of poisoning. Since that time the **AAP recommends disposing of any syrup of ipecac**. There are several reasons behind the new recommendation. Most importantly, there has never been any evidence that vomiting helps children who eat or drink something poisonous. It was a practice based on intuition rather than science.

Now for the scary numbers: More than 1.2 million children under the age of 5 were victims of unintentional poisonings in 2004 according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers. About 90,000 were treated in hospitals and **sadly about 100 did not survive**. About 90% of the poisonings occurred in the home usually between 4 and 11pm.

I can tell you from experience that it is not pleasant to go to Emergency Room with a sick child and it is especially unpleasant from 4 to 11pm.

They put everything in their mouth, some of it is dangerous. Take precautions now so you are not the one to say **“I only left them for a second”**.

About the Author: Jack Smith is the CEO of InfantHouse.com, a baby proofing company serving the Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas area. He is the Daddy of boy/girl twins, affiliated with the International Association for Child Safety and contributing author of “Chaos 2 Calm” “the moms-of-multiples’ guide to an organized family”.