

How much do you know about poisonings and prevention?

1) Children less than six years of age accounted for what percentage of poison exposures in the United States in 1994?

- a) 34%
- b) 44%
- c) 54%



and the answer is...

2) How many of those exposures were fatal?

- a) 26
- b) 437
- c) 2,988



and the answer is...

3) What is the most common cause of fatal poisoning in children under six?

- a) Household cleansers
- b) Iron supplements
- c) Alcohol



and the answer is...

4) What is the most common contributing factor in poisonings of 3 to 7 year olds?

- a) Improper monitoring of the child's behaviour
- b) The caretaker's temporary distraction (such as a phone call)
- c) Improper storage of poisonous substances



and the answer is...

5) The age group most at risk for accidental poison ingestions is:

- a) 1-3 years old
- b) 4-6 years old
- c) 7-9 years old



and the answer is...

6) What percentage of toddlers who experience an accidental poisoning have another episode before the age of six?

- a) 10%
- b) 20%
- c) 30%



and the answer is...

7) What proportion of childhood poisonings occur outside the home?

- a) 1/10
- b) 1/5
- c) 1/3



and the answer is...

1. c) 54%.

There were over a million reported poison exposures of children under six in 1994.

2. a) 26.

Better product packaging and poison prevention education has helped reduce the number of childhood poisoning deaths from several hundred a year in the 1960s to just a few dozen a year today.

3. b) Iron supplements.

According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC), 22 out of 98 poisoning deaths of children under six reported between 1990 and 1992 were due to iron poisoning. These were mainly ingestions of tablets intended to treat prenatal iron deficiency in adults. Children's multivitamin tablets, on the other hand, typically contain so little iron that even eating dozens would not be fatal. However, children should be taught that even candy-like children's vitamin supplements are medicine, and not candy.

By the way, medications are involved in the most accidental poisonings, followed by household cleaning products, personal care products (toothpaste, cologne, etc.) and plants.

4. c) Improper storage of poisonous substances.

In one study, improper storage was a factor in 51% of poisonings. Improper monitoring of the child and distraction were factors in 23% and 13%, respectively.

5. a) 1-3 years old.

Caregivers should have a poison prevention strategy even before the child can crawl or walk.

6. c) 30%.

In the case of childhood poisoning, it seems that experience is not the best teacher. Poisoning prevention efforts should be continued throughout early childhood.

7. b) 1/5.

While most poisonings happen in the home, a significant proportion occur in other places. It is important that family and friends who have children visit, as well as all child-care providers and preschool, practice poisoning prevention strategies.