

## FEATURED INSIDE

- Trick-or-Treating Without Trouble
- Cadmium, Lead and Keeping Kids Safe

## CONTACTS

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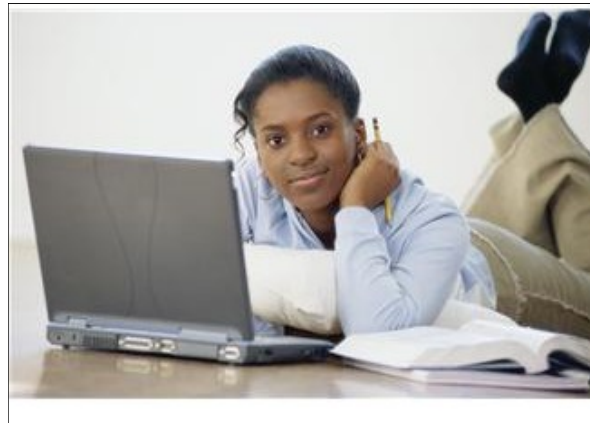
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## Poison Center Offers Tips on a Safe Back-to-School Season

For all kids, returning to school is filled with possibilities. But for pre-teens, teenagers and college students in particular, it can also be filled with potential dangers. By talking to your children about substances that can harm them, you can help them get the best experience out of their prime learning years.

The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville and the American Association of Poison Control Centers offer the following tips on back-to-school dangers.

- Prescribed and used correctly, prescription medications have legitimate uses and positive results. But prescription pain medicine, also known as opioids, are commonly misused and abused among all age groups. Opioids can slow the body's systems down to the point where a person stops breathing. Other potential dangers include ADHD drugs like Adderall® and Ritalin®, which are abused as "brain boosters" or "academic enhancers." Misusing or abusing them could lead to an increased heart rate, restlessness, seizures and difficulty breathing.
- It may be easy to discount the seriousness of alcohol use among teens and college kids. Don't. What might seem like lighthearted teenage experimentation can contribute to academic failure, violence, injuries, sexual assaults and death. Alcohol



toxicity can be fatal or could result in permanent brain damage. Signs include mental confusion, low body temperature, coma, irregular or decreased breathing, and pale or bluish skin. Excessive alcohol use can lead to vomiting and unconsciousness. Talk to your teen and college student about drinking and its consequences. People who start drinking at a young age are more likely to become an alcoholic.

- The dangers of inhalants are real --- and deadly. These substances, which can include solvents and gases that are abused to get a high, are increasingly common among children ages 10 to 12, and are a special concern because kids can die the first, tenth or hundredth time they sniff or huff. Tweens or teens can experience toxic effects like a dazed appearance, slurred speech, nose bleeds and loss of muscle control. Look for unusually large collections

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# Trick-or-Treating Without Trouble

While Halloween is typically one of the highlights of a child's year, it can be less fun for parents, who fret about everything from buying or making the right costume to the safety of the goodies in the trick-or-treat bag.

With that in mind, the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville and the American Association of Poison Control Centers offer a few tips aimed at making the spookiest time of the year a little less frightening for parents:

- Inspect all treats before the kids eat them. Eat only treats in original and unopened wrappers. If wrappers are faded, have holes, tears or signs of rewrapping, throw them away. Throw away all unwrapped candy or treats.
- Look out for Rover's well-being, too. Some treats, such as chocolate, can be poisonous for pets.
- Be wary of dry ice. While dry ice is a great special effect for a party, keep small pieces of it out of individual drink glasses. Dry ice can cause frostbite if it comes in contact with the skin or mouth.
- Not all Halloween hazards are poison-related! Put trick-or-treaters in brightly colored costumes made of flame-resistant

materials. Add some reflective tape on trick-or-treat bags to make sure your child is visible after it gets dark.

- Carry a flashlight after the sun goes down, and make sure excited trick-or-treaters don't inadvertently wander in the way of passing cars.
- Stay in local and familiar neighborhoods. Send an adult with young children.
- Keep candle-lit Jack-o-Lanterns off doorsteps and out of the way of foot traffic. Fire hazards could be a danger to trick-or-treaters dealing with long or cumbersome costumes.



For questions about poisons on Halloween and any other day of the year, call your local poison control center at 1 (800) 222-1222.

## Back-to-School

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- of paint, spray cans, or room deodorizers and notice red eyes or chemical smells on the breath or clothing. Be wary of the dangers of "huffing" and **DON'T** tolerate experimentation.
- Energy drinks contain large doses of caffeine. Some contain additional stimulants promoted to increase energy, enhance mood and delay sleep. The amount of caffeine in many energy drinks is much greater than the amount found in soda and is often much greater than the amount found in a cup of coffee.

The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville is accredited by the AAPCC who supports the nation's 60 poison control centers in their efforts to prevent poisoning. Poison centers offer free and confidential services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you believe you have been exposed to a poison or have questions about whether a substance is poisonous, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222.

[www.fpicjax.org](http://www.fpicjax.org)

# Cadmium, Lead and Keeping Kids Safe

Six months ago the word “cadmium” probably didn’t mean much to most people. These days, though, cadmium is quickly becoming a household name.

Cadmium is a metal used in the manufacturing of batteries, dyes, glasses, and ceramics, and is one of two main culprits responsible for huge recalls of toys and children’s products. Products containing cadmium are not harmful to touch but can be harmful if they are put in the mouth or swallowed, which can result in a poisoning. Since children are often putting things in their mouths, they are considered an at-risk age group.



Lead, the second

culprit, is a more commonly known threat and can be poisonous if absorbed in the body through breathing or swallowing. Lead poisoning can happen gradually or through large exposures.

The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville and the American Association of Poison Control Centers offer the following tips aimed at preventing cadmium and lead poisoning.

- Read product ingredient labels before purchasing an item, especially if it’s intended for children. Avoid products that do not have ingredient lists available.
- Keep small items out of children’s reach. These items can be choking hazards but also can contain toxins such as cadmium or lead.
- Make sure children wash hands thoroughly after

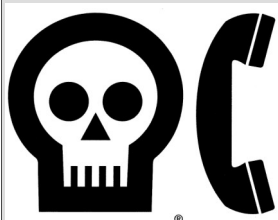
playing and before eating.

- Be aware: Currently, there are no federal laws regulating manufacturers’ use of cadmium in children’s jewelry. In some cases, companies use cadmium as a substitute for lead since the United States bans the use of lead in manufacturing children’s products or toys.
- Take an inventory of possible lead sources in the home even though regulations are tighter. These sources may include lead paint used in older homes (before 1978), drinking water from lead pipe plumbing, toys made outside of the country, contaminated herbal supplements, and small weights (like fishing lures).
- Be particularly aware of the dangers of lead poisoning in small children: Unborn babies, infants, and toddlers are most vulnerable to the effects of chronic lead exposure.

If you are concerned that your child might have come into contact with a product containing cadmium or lead, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222 or your child’s doctor.



**The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville is a cooperative effort between the University of Florida College of Medicine, Shands Jacksonville, the University of Florida Health Science Center - Jacksonville, and the State of Florida, Department of Health, Children’s Medical Services. The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville is designated as an accredited regional poison control center by the American Association of Poison Control Centers.**



This newsletter is brought to you by the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville and was produced with assistance from the American Association of Poison Control Centers and local poison centers around the country. When you dial 1-800-222-1222, your call is answered by a medical professional with special training in poisoning management. Help is fast, free, confidential, and available 24-hours a day, every day.