

## FEATURED THIS ISSUE

- A Thanksgiving thankfully free of food poisoning
- Make the holidays jolly by keeping them healthy
- Ring in the New Year safely

## CONTACTS

### FLORIDA/USVI POISON INFORMATION CENTER - JACKSONVILLE

Shands Jacksonville/  
University of Florida  
655 West 8th Street  
Box C-23  
Jacksonville, FL 32209  
904.244.4465 - Office  
904.244.4063 - Fax  
**1.800.222.1222** –  
Poison Help Line  
[www.fpicjax.org](http://www.fpicjax.org)

### AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF POISON CONTROL CENTERS

515 King Street  
Suite 510  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
[www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org)

## Giving Thanks for a Safe Thanksgiving

You've spent hours on the turkey, just barely avoided botching the gravy and successfully kept the pie crust from burning.

Here are a few tips from the American Association of Poison Control Centers and the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville to keep that most unwelcome Thanksgiving guest – food poisoning – from messing up your perfect holiday meal.

- Handle food carefully. Food poisoning usually happens because of poor food handling practices. Symptoms can include fever, headache, diarrhea, abdominal discomfort and vomiting. The guilty party in food poisonings is bacteria. Wash hands, dishes, utensils, kitchen equipment and work surfaces before and after handling. Be particularly careful around knives, washing them thoroughly after each use. And remember, even frozen food can contain bacteria.
- Cook food carefully. Salmonella is a common and widespread cause of food poisoning. It is typically found in raw meats, poultry, eggs, milk, fish and their byproducts. Salmonella can only be destroyed by cooking food thoroughly to temperatures above 140 degrees.
- It's okay to thaw turkey in its origi-

nal plastic for one to two days in the refrigerator. After that, move the turkey to plastic wrap or foil. Don't keep it in its original wrapping for more than two days.

- Don't stuff the turkey in advance and then refrigerate it. The inside of the turkey is a perfect place for bacteria to grow. Remove all stuffing before refrigerating leftover meats. Keep the stuffing, gravy or broth in separate containers.
- Be careful around the booze. It's important to be mindful of small children – particularly those who aren't afraid to pick up discarded cups left behind by adults. Even a small amount of alcohol can poison a child.
- Also be wary of choking hazards. Peanuts, raisins, hard candies, cocktail sausages and other hors d'oeuvres are tasty additions to any holiday meal, but they can be choking hazards for the littlest parties.
- Keep these foods out of the reach of very young children to prevent a choking incident.

If you have questions about food safety, call the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville at 1-800-222-1222. Poison centers are free, confidential and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Don't guess - - - be sure!



# Making a Merry Holiday Season Safe

The old Christmas carol says the holiday season is “the most wonderful time of the year,” and that can certainly be true. By taking a few precautions, you can focus on family and fun this holiday season ---and ideally avoid some of the perennial holiday hazards.

A few tips, courtesy of the American Association of Poison Control Centers and the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville, to keep the holidays merry, peaceful and safe follow.

- Though they're not fatal poisons, poinsettias, if consumed, can cause some stomach pain and even vomiting. Keep small children and pets away from poinsettias to keep the plant pretty and the kids and pets comfortable.
- Keep small children and animals away from other seasonal plants, including Mistletoe berries, Holly berries, the fruit of Jerusalem Cherry, the leaves and twigs of Boxwood and all parts of Yew plants.
- Christmas tree preservatives are usually not toxic. Still, check the label for special ingredients and warnings. As for the trees themselves: pines, spruces and junipers can cause stomach discomfort if a lot is eaten. In other words: Don't eat the Christmas tree!
- Antique ornaments might have hidden hazards. Be aware that some older ornaments



may be decorated with harmful lead paints or contain poisonous liquids.

- Lead is also a hazard in some tree light wires. Wash hands before and after handling tree lights.
- Be mindful of “icicles” or tinsel. Both can out be a choking hazard if put in the mouth.

- Angel hair is finely spun glass which can cause cuts or irritation when handled or swallowed.

- If relatives come to stay through the holidays, be sure their medications are put up high and out of the

reach of children. Medications commonly taken by seniors such as blood pressure or blood sugar medicines can be deadly to children, even with a single dose.

- Designate a locked room where evening guests can place coats and purses that may contain medications.
- Empty ash trays often.. Ingesting as few as three cigarette butts can require a child be sent to the hospital.
- Make sure small button batteries are not available to children. Recent studies have shown these batteries can stick to a child's esophagus and cause internal burns.

For questions about poisons on Christmas and any other day of the year, call the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville at 1-800- 222-1222.

# Resolve to Ring in 2011 Safely

When the holidays are over, it's time for that last round of celebration: New Year's Eve.

Here's a little advice on safe celebrating from the American Association of Poison Control Centers and the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville .

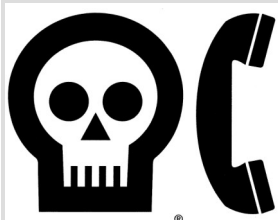
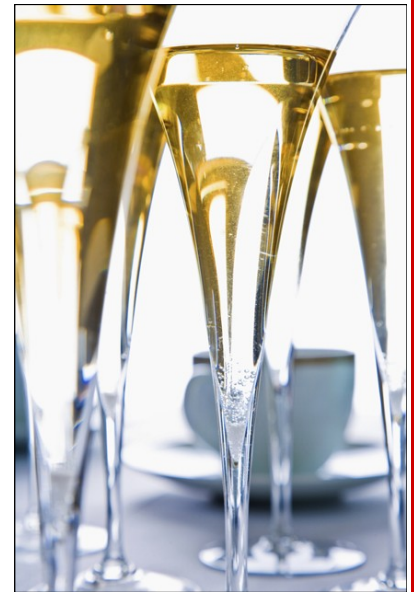
- All drinks are not created equal. Most beer contains 4-7% alcohol. But drinkers need to be aware of variations in alcohol content. Someone used to the effects of a 3% light beer might be surprised after drinking a high-proof beer with 17% alcohol. Another problem is the false sense of sobriety when consuming caffeinated sports drinks that have 12% alcohol. Sweet liqueurs and mixed drinks are hazardous to children, who may drink amounts large enough to cause a serious poisoning. When reading labels on alcoholic products, remember that the proof number is half of the alcoholic content by percentage. So, that means a vodka that is 80 proof is 40% alcohol by volume.
- Carbonated mixers including club soda or tonic water may cause alcohol to be absorbed into a person's system more quickly.
- Keep an eye on the children. Abandoned drink glasses left within reach could contain enough alcohol to seriously harm a child.
- Watch out for dogs and birds, too. Both are notorious for helping themselves. Some foods can be highly toxic for pets. Chocolate and caffeine, for example, can be highly dangerous for dogs and birds.
- Vodka-spiked Jell-O shots are inappropriate for parties where children are present.
- Candles and oil lamps can set the festive mood, but they're also attractive for small children. If a child drinks the scented, brightly col-

ored lamp oil, it can end up in the lungs, with a potentially fatal result. Lamp oil on the skin or in the eyes can also cause pain and irritation.

- In warm climates, parties often celebrate on boats. Remember: Exhaust from a running boat engine can produce toxic levels of carbon monoxide the same way a car or generator engine can. Symptoms from carbon monoxide exposure can seem like flu – headache, nausea, and dizziness. If anyone begins to feel these effects, turn off the motor and get the person to fresh air. They may also need medical assistance. Call the poison center for instructions.
- Finally, fireplaces, kerosene or propane heaters can also be a source of carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure there are carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors in your home, and check their batteries to make sure you ring in the New Year safely.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers supports the nation's 60 poison control centers in their efforts to keep New Year's Eve and all other days of the year safe. Poison centers offer free and confidential services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you have a question about poisons, call the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville at 1-800-222-1222.



**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.**

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Have a Happy  
and  
Safe Holiday Season!

From Your Friends  
at the

Florida/USVI Poison  
Information Center - Jacksonville!

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.