

POISONINGS IN THE U.S.A. - 1967

In 1967, 83,704 accidental poisonings were reported voluntarily by 395 Poison Control Centers in 43 states. Accidental poisoning statistics, with the exception of mortality data, therefore, do not represent the total national incidence of ingestions since many of the poisonings and calls are treated by private physicians and hospitals not directly associated with the Poison Control Center network. (There are no Poison Control Centers in Vermont.)

Children lead all other groups

Of the total poisonings, 72,661 involved children under the age of 5. Children in the 1½ and 2 year age group normally lead all other age groups with 40-45% of all poisonings. Aspirin is the product most frequently ingested, followed by other medications, household cleansers and polishes, petroleum products, cosmetics, and pesticides. The high incidence of child poisoning follows the pattern of previous years. The percentages of categories of products involved in accidental ingestions remain remarkably similar to previous years' experiences. MOST OF THESE POISONINGS OCCURRED IN AND AROUND THE HOME AND COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED.

Poisoning in Perspective

Poisonings that the pesticide related quite often receive wide publicity — possibly because the chances of death are greater or the need for pesticides appears less important. As poisoning records indicate, however, other products such as aspirin, medicines, and various household products are a much more common source of poisonings than pesticides. Compare the national poisoning percentages of children under 5 year of age for the past few years:

Percent of Accidental Poisoning—U.S. Children under 5 Years of Age

Type of Substances	1967	1966	1965	1964
Medicine (Incl. Aspirin*)	53	54	54	51
Cleansers and Polishes	14	15	15	16
Petroleum Products	5	5	5	5
Cosmetics	6	6	5	6
Pesticides	6	6	6	7
Poisonous Plants	4	3	3	3
Turpentine, Paint, Etc.	5	5	5	5
Miscellaneous	7	6	6	6
Total Poisonings Reported	72,661	64,634	63,352	56,097

*Aspirin annually accounts for 22-25% of total accidental poisonings.

What Causes Poisonings

Many of the accidental poisonings in and around the home result from (a) failure to store poisons in a safe place out of reach of children; (b) improper use of poisons such as moth balls or crystals, roach tablets, rat baits, etc.; (c) emptying poisonous materials into unmarked containers such as soft drink bottles; and (d) failure to promptly and safely dispose of empty poison containers.

How to Prevent Poisoning

Keep medications, household preparations, pesticides, etc., in original labelled containers out of reach of children or irresponsible persons, preferably in a locked cabinet or closet away from food, feed or medicine. Do not store these chemicals under the sink or similar easily accessible places.

Particular emphasis should be placed on proper disposal of empty pesticide containers. They should be promptly flushed out with water and disposed of by wrapping in paper, tying with a string and placing in a garbage can with the top secured or by burying in a sanitary landfill or in a remote section of the farm where they will not present a hazard to water supplies, valuable plants, wildlife, or others. Metal cans, with the exception of pressurized aerosol cans, should be punctured or crushed before wrapping in paper for disposal.

the name of the game is "turf"

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