

Poison Prevention

Newsletter

September 2021

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210



Jan. 1, 2021, through Jul. 11, 2021. The majority of these exposures were among 0–5-year-olds, an increase of 60% compared to the same period prior to the Covid-19 pandemic (2019). So best to leave the cleaning to school personnel and teach children to avoid coming in contact with any cleaning products they might find in or around the classroom.

Medication Safety

Every school has its own medication policy so if your child requires medication during the school day, be sure to check in with the school nurse or medical director before the school year begins. New York State Law requires most medications to be administered by a nurse or adult supervisor at the nurse or health office. Students who have permission for self-administering or managing their own medications first need approval from a guardian and/or healthcare provider. Review with your child their medication plan and if they are self-administering, make sure they know to never let another child even touch their medication.

Playground Safety

Playgrounds can be a breeding ground for poisonous and non-poisonous plants and mushrooms. It is often hard to tell the difference for the untrained eye. Among common

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Keep Your Child Safe...at School

Cleaning Products

Due to Covid-19, cleaning products such as hand sanitizers, disinfectant wipes and even bleach may be used more often in classrooms this fall. Cleaning products contain dangerous chemicals that can be irritating to eyes, skin, throat, and place children at risk for serious injury if ingested. Disinfectant wipes should only be used on surfaces, not on hands or other body parts – and certainly not on the face! Children should avoid coming in contact with any classroom disinfectant due to the toxic chemicals present in cleaning products. Generally, hand sanitizers contain

ethyl alcohol, which can be dangerous when ingested and could cause alcohol poisoning. Some sanitizers contain methyl alcohol, also known as methanol, which can be more serious and deadly if ingested. Don't include hand sanitizers in your child's backpack or give them a small-sized bottle of hand sanitizer as children may be more at-risk for ingesting it if it is readily accessible. The benefits may not outweigh the risks!

The American Association of Poison Control Centers reports that there were 18,106 Hand Sanitizer exposure cases reported to the 55 U.S. Poison Control Centers between





Upstate New York Poison Center Welcomes New Medical Director

The Upstate New York Poison Center is proud to announce Dr. Vince Calleo as the new medical director at the Center. Dr. Calleo assumed the role as only the 4th person to hold this title in the poison center's 63-year history. Dr. Howard Weinberger served as the first medical director from 1968-1991, when Dr. Richard Cantor took the reins. Dr. Cantor served until 2018 at which time Dr. Michael Hodgman assumed the role.

Dr. Calleo is not new to the center, having spent the last two years here as a Medical Toxicology Fellow. Prior to that, Dr. Calleo completed undergraduate work at Binghamton University, medical school training at SUNY Upstate Medical University, an Emergency Medicine Residency and a Pediatric Emergency Medicine Fellowship at SUNY Upstate. Along with his role as Medical Director, Dr.

Calleo will also serve as an Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine and an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at SUNY Upstate.

"I am thrilled to have this opportunity to build on all of the amazing work of my predecessor, Dr. Michael Hodgman, and I hope to continue to lead the poison center toward a successful future," says Dr. Calleo, "It has been an honor to spend my career at SUNY Upstate Medical University and expand my knowledge with the recent two-year fellowship, learning from some of the most accomplished toxicologists out there."

"Dr. Calleo has quickly become a valued member of our poison center. His knowledge and background make him the perfect person for the job," says Michele Caliva, administrative director of the poison center. "In his

new position, he will lead the medical direction for the department. He will also work with the management team to sustain and grow the poison center."

Dr. Calleo will take the helm from Dr. Michael Hodgman. Dr. Hodgman was named Medical Director in 2018 but has been a part of the poison center since 2000. Dr. Hodgman is credited with starting our current Medical Toxicology Fellowship Program in 2011. He will stay on with the poison center as Associate Medical Director.

"Dr. Hodgman enthusiastically helped lead our poison center these past three years through many changes, including how we responded during the pandemic," says Dr. Christine Stork, clinical director of the poison center, "He has been an integral part of our center since his start with us more than 20 years ago. He started our medical toxicology fellowship, the toxicology outpatient clinic and has been a leader in evolving the poison center into what it is today."

**Our 3rd Annual
Health Education
Webinar Series**
kicks off **Thursday 9/23/21** on
pediatric poisonings by
Dr. Vince Calleo our
new medical director.
Be sure to check it out!

Marijuana Use in Children

The Upstate New York Poison Center saw a significant increase in the number of calls for children exposed to marijuana products. Poison Center data shows that calls nearly tripled from 2019 through 2020 for children aged 6 and under ingesting cannabis, most often as a marijuana edible.

"We worry about young children and marijuana. The edibles often come in bright-colored packaging that look just like popular candy products. Kids can't always tell the difference, especially for those who don't read yet," says Dr. Christine Stork, clinical director of the Upstate New York Poison Center.

Many of these edibles are made to look and taste like candy, cookies or brownies. Directions can sometimes be confusing as each marijuana gummy can contain one recommended dose or more than one dose. Also, as the effects of the marijuana edibles can take up to an hour to kick in (depending on potency), oftentimes consumers feel the product is not working and double or triple up on the

dose leading to ...overdose. Overdose in children often happens because children are curious but also because edibles are made to taste sweet, like candy, which entices children to eat them. Edible products are also more highly concentrated, so symptoms can be more severe in children, especially considering a child's smaller size and weight. Marijuana ingestions in children can cause low blood pressure, severe tiredness, trouble breathing, even coma and often require a trip to a healthcare facility. In looking at poison center data from 2011- 2020 calls began to spike in 2016 for children ≤ 6 ingesting marijuana products (plant, oils or edibles) and this year's totals seem to be on par with 2020.

"The rapid increase in toddler exposure is probably due to many factors", says Dr. Michael Hodgman, a medical toxicologist and past medical director with the poison center. "In general, attitudes towards cannabis are changing while more states are allowing retail sale of cannabis products. As a result, sales of cannabis products are dramatically increasing nationwide."

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We urge you, if you are over 21 and choose to use these any of these products:

1. Keep them up, away, and out of sight of children
2. Save our number 1-800-222-1222, just in case. We are ready to take your call 24/7/365.
3. If you suspect a child has ingested any form of marijuana, call us. Symptoms or reactions are often not seen immediately. Call us!

The Upstate New York Poison Center is staffed by registered nurses & pharmacists trained to manage all poisoning calls, including marijuana products. In a poison emergency or for poison prevention information, we are only a phone call away at 1-800-222-1222.

For free Poison Center materials scan the QR code:



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poisonous fall foliage is poison ivy and sumac, pokeweed and pokeberries, jimson weed, hogweed, and some mushrooms. Teach children to never pick a mushroom or plant. If they do, be sure to tell them to wash their hands immediately after touching just to be safe.

Other items like trash, cigarette butts and sadly, even discarded syringes can make their way onto playgrounds. Unfortunately, in these times children’s playgrounds may be visited by unwelcome guests and leave behind evidence of drug use such as packaging or used needles. Teach children to stay away from these items and to never pick up discarded packing or needles as they can be dangerous if even touched.

