

Nearly 1 in 4 grandparents store prescription medicines where children can easily find them

April 16 2012

Unintentional poisonings from medicines cause more emergency room visits for young children each year than do car accidents.

One key reason may be that nearly 1 of every 4 grandparents says that they store [prescription medicines](#) in easy-access ways, according to a new poll.

The University of Michigan Mott Children's Hospital [National Poll](#) on Children's Health recently asked parents and grandparents of children aged 1 to 5 years about the presence of medicines in their homes and how they are stored.

"Every 10 minutes a young child in the U.S. is taken to the emergency room because of possible poisoning from swallowing a prescription medicine or over-the-counter medicine," says Matthew M. Davis, M.D., M.A.P.P., director of the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health.

"[Emergency room visits](#) for accidental poisonings among [young children](#) have become much more frequent in the last decade. We hope the results of this poll are a reminder to parents, grandparents and all those who care for young children: check around your homes to make sure that medicines are safely stored out of reach," says Davis, who also is associate professor in the Child [Health Evaluation](#) and Research Unit at

the U-M Medical School, and associate professor of Public Policy at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy.

The poll results showed 23 percent of grandparents and 5 percent of parents reported storing prescription medicine in easy-to-access places, including daily-dose boxes that children can open. Eighteen percent of grandparents and 8 percent of parents said they store over-the-counter medicines in easily accessible spots.

The most common type of prescription in an accidental ingestion for young children is an opiate medicine, such as a morphine-related painkiller. The most common types of over-the-counter medicines that prompts [emergency room](#) visits for possible poisonings among young children include acetaminophen, used to reduce fever.

To keep children safe, parents and grandparents are generally urged to keep medicine safely out of reach of young children, in child-proof containers.

But the poll also found that about two-thirds of adults say they would support new laws that would require companies to create single-dose packages of tablets, capsules and liquid medicines that would make it harder for young children to ingest large quantities.

"The support for potential new requirements for single-dose dispensing of medicine in solid and liquid format is quite strong. However, there may be barriers to passage of such legislation – not the least of which are environmental concerns about increasing packaging," says Davis.

Provided by University of Michigan Health System

Citation: Nearly 1 in 4 grandparents store prescription medicines where children can easily find

them (2012, April 16) retrieved 3 May 2024 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-04-grandparents-prescription-medicines-children-easily.html>

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