

Study shows preschoolers affected by medication-related poisonings at alarming rate

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Poisonings in young children have increased over the past decade, mainly due to medications in the home. A new study led by the Central Ohio Poison Center at Nationwide Children's Hospital, found that medication-related poisonings in children younger than 6 increased by 33 percent during the 11 year study period.

According to the study, released in the May print issue of the journal, *Pediatric Emergency Care*, the overall total number of poisonings in young children in the 5 states where the data was collected, increased by 12 percent, largely due to medications. The effects of these pharmaceutical poisonings were often life-threatening. Compared to the 10 percent increase in the number of serious medical outcomes related to non-medication poisonings in children, there was a 98 percent increase in serious medical outcomes related to medications.

"Parents may forget that supplements and nonprescription pills can be just as dangerous as [prescription pills](#), especially if their child ingests many of them," said Henry Spiller, lead author of the study and director of the Central Ohio Poison Center at Nationwide Children's. "I suspect the increase of pharmaceutical-related poisonings is due to the increase of medications like dietary supplements, antipsychotics, [cardiovascular drugs](#) and other medications in the home."

The only medication which did not have an increase during the 10 year

period was cough and cold pharmaceuticals. Before 2006, there was a consistent, annual increase in the number of children with cough/cold-related poisoning exposures, but in 2009, the [Food and Drug Administration](#) issued an advisory against use of these types of medication in children under the age of 2. This caused a steady decline in the number of children harmed by cough and [cold medications](#).

"This suggests that [public health policy](#) changes can have a positive effect on helping determine what young children are and are not exposed to," said Spiller. "As we continue using many types of medications, poison prevention education efforts should include a focus on the availability of these products to young children. Keep them locked up and out of site, where children cannot access them."

More information: journals.lww.com/pec-online/pages/default.aspx

Provided by Nationwide Children's Hospital

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