

# Expert tips to avoid accidental poisonings at school

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(HealthDay)—At schools and daycares, an army of sanitizers and

detergents is used to keep germs at bay.

But poison-control experts warn these products contain chemicals that can be harmful to young children.

"Each year, approximately 28,000 exposures occur in a [school](#)," said Stephen Kaminski, executive director of the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

His organization has partnered with the National Pesticide Information Center "to promote poison safety in the classroom and ensure that schools and daycares, where children spend most of their days, are healthy and safe environments," he said in an association news release.

Many schools and daycares use antimicrobial sanitizers and disinfectants to kill bacteria and illness-causing viruses.

"While these cleaning substances play an important role in protecting public health by increasing productivity, lowering absences, and reducing indoor allergens, they also contain chemicals that may cause serious health problems if used in the wrong way or in the wrong amounts," said Alicia Leytem, a specialist at the National Pesticide Information Center.

Children are particularly vulnerable to the chemicals used in cleaners since their immune systems aren't fully developed. Young kids are also naturally curious, which increases the odds they'll be exposed to potentially dangerous chemicals, the poison control experts warned.

They offered the following tips to help parents and schools keep children safe:

- Store chemicals properly. Keep all cleaning products, sanitizers

and other chemicals out of children's reach. Store these products in a high place that's out of sight. It's also important to keep these chemicals in their original containers and never mix cleaning chemicals, which could create dangerous fumes.

- Don't ignore labels. Read and carefully follow the instructions on the labels of cleaners and other chemicals before using or discarding them.
- Supervise bug sprays. Children should not apply their own insect repellents. An adult should apply these products after reading the instructions. Don't apply bug spray to [children's](#) hands. Once inside, kids should wash off insect repellent.
- Be prepared. Accidents happen. Expert medical advice is available at all times through the free Poison Help hotline at (800) 222-1222. Contact [poison control](#) right away if a child or adult may have been exposed to a potentially dangerous substance.

**More information:** The American Academy of Pediatrics provides more [back-to-school safety tips](#).

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