



Medication Safety & Summer Safety Considerations

The statistics on this infographic are horrifying and parents and caregivers need to take note! To think that things being brought into our home to assist with infections, pain, allergies, heart or blood pressure conditions or a whole host of other medical reason, are the same things that are bringing kids to the ER, having kids admitted to the hospital (over 24 each day) or causing kids to die (1 every 12 days), should cause us to pause. While medications (pills, liquids, ointments, inhalers, patches, etc.) can be helpful in our health needs, they also need to be looked at as a poisoning agent. In fact, medications (over-the-counter and prescription) are THE LEADING CAUSE OF POISONING in children. If we would only think of medications as the poisonous products that they can be, we might do a better job of storing them out of sight and reach of children.

Here are a few safety tips related to medications, especially as we head into summertime – a time of travel and potential house guests staying at our home, lake places or vacation destinations.

- Keep all medication in their original container. This is important so that if a child gets into them, you will know what product was taken, the strength and the potential number of pills or other medication they could have consumed.
- Store medications OUT OF SIGHT and REACH of children. Remember that kids are curious by nature, and they love to explore in things, behind closed doors and in places you may not even know they are aware of. When thinking about “out of sight and reach”, don’t just childproof for the skills your child has at the moment, but think about what their next milestone may be. For a baby that can’t yet crawl, having medications on a countertop may be sufficient. However, as that child begins to walk and climb, putting things up higher is indicated. As they learn to climb, locks on the cabinets may be warranted as well. Always stay one step ahead of the skills your child has when childproofing.
- Remember that child-resistant (the standard required for medication packaging) is NOT childproof. Special covers on medication bottles doesn’t mean kids will not get into them, it only means that it is intended to slow them down.
- When you are traveling, think about how you will store medications that may be in a first aid kit in your suitcase. Imagine dad goes to load the van or fill it up with fuel and mom needs to grab a quick shower. Curious toddlers may just find themselves into the luggage on the floor and into the bag containing the travel medications. Consider using a locked box to take along in your suitcase since putting cabinet latches on hotel or VRBO hardware is not an option.
- If company comes to your home, consider asking them to place their suitcase in a closet or cosmetic bags up high on a shelf. Something new in the home is sure to entice young kids to explore.
- Be sure to store the Poison Help Number in your phone so you have it in the event of an emergency. That number is 1-800-222-1222.

