

## Summer Safety

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### Poison in your Suitcase?



It's Summer. School is out, bringing changes to daily household routines. Vacations are a time to relax but parents need to remember that an unsupervised child is at increased risk of poisoning and other injuries. This applies not only when a child is traveling with family and friends but also when family and friends come to visit. Medications and other products that are usually locked away at home, are typically more accessible when traveling, especially when staying in a hotel room. Whether you are visiting someone's home, staying in a hotel, motel or cabin, think of your destination as your home away from home. As soon as you arrive, do a quick safety check of the new surroundings. Move cleaning products, supplies for the grill, ashtrays, hazardous appliances and sharp objects to a safe storage place. Consider bring your own safety covers for outlets. Likewise, visitors to your home may not be used to having young children around and may leave dangerous objects in unlocked suitcases or other places within easy reach of children.

The Indiana Poison Center offers the following tips for a poison safe summer:

#### AT HOME:

- Give guests a safe place such as a cabinet that locks or a tackle box

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- with a padlock to store medications and other potentially dangerous items during their visit.
- Be especially careful with daily pill containers; they are rarely child-proof and pose an even greater risk as they give access to multiple medications at one time.
- Visitors who are not used to being around children should be reminded about safe storage of personal belongings, suitcases and handbags.

#### ON THE ROAD:

- Keep medications locked up in a suitcase or another suitable container. Tackle boxes with padlocks work especially well for road trips.



- Remember to removed all potential poisons from handbags and diaper bags, and keep them out of reach of children. Items like medication, sunscreen, insect repellent and baby powder are big offenders this time of year.

#### AWAY FROM HOME:

- Make anyplace you stay poison safe. Lock up medications and household products. Use child-resistant packaging for these items, keeping in mind that they are not **childproof**. They simply slow children down.
- Avoid bringing along a few pills in

an unmarked container, such as pill-boxes and small plastic bags.

- Remember to keep house and garden plants, ashtrays, and alcoholic beverages out of reach of young children.
- Check for other safety features such as outlet covers, gates at the tops and bottoms of staircases, window blind cords, etc

Take the poison center phone number wherever you go. Program it into all cell phones, as well. Call 1-800-222-1222 from any place in the United States to reach a local poison center, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

### Safe Summer Celebrations

Independence Day is a day of firecrackers, explosives, smoke producing products and sparklers. MOST fireworks injuries happen to children, when they are not monitored closely. So beware.



#### SPARKLERS:

Burns are the major danger with sparklers. They are generally non-soluble and considered non-toxic if ingested. Green, red and gold sparklers are considered to be more dangerous than silver ones, when ingested in quantity, due to the higher nitrate component. Watch children closely when using sparklers, as they can also cause eye injuries.

#### Toxic Trivia



Five questions located within to test your poison knowledge – answers can be found on page 4.

Good Luck!!!

# TOXICTRIVIA

## EXPLOSIVES:

The following ingredients in different proportions will be found in explosive fireworks (including but not limited to firecrackers, cherry bombs and roman candles)

- Potassium nitrate
- Barium chlorate
- Carbon & sulfur
- Potassium perchlorate
- Aluminum powder
- Sodium bicarbonate
- Perchlorate arsenic

## DERMAL EXPOSURES:

The most frequently reported injuries are to the eyes and skin, and should be treated as an acid exposure. As with any chemical burn, never attempt to neutralize. Neutralizing an acid with an alkali produces HEAT, complicating the chemical injury with a thermal one. Initial treatment advice includes irrigating the eyes/skin with tepid water for 15-20 minutes. If pain or irritation persists, a medical evaluation is indicated. Specific treatment advice is available from the **Indiana Poison Center**.

## GLOW "JEWELRY":

Glow sticks and glow jewelry are a favorite of children this time of year. Squeeze the cylinders and they produce a bright neon glow for several hours. Unfortunately, they are often bitten by young children and pets. They contain a chemical called dibutyl phthalate, which can be irritating to the eyes, mouth and mucous membranes, but generally does not result in toxicity. If you discover that your child has given into the urge to taste the mysterious glowing liquid, wipe off any visible fluid with a damp cloth and encourage the child to rinse his/her mouth. For complaints of burning or irritation, call the Indiana Poison Center

1. Recently in the news, this toxin is 500x more lethal than cobra venom and 1500x more lethal than cyanide.

## SWIMMING POOLS:

Taking a dip to cool off? Be sure to take care when preparing and maintaining your pool this summer. Keep pool chemicals high and dry and away from pets and children. Never mix chemicals before putting them into the pool unless the instructions say to do so. Do not check the potency of a chemical by "getting a good whiff" of it; it could literally take your breath away. Follow the instructions carefully; the supplier of the pool chemical is usually a good reference for advice and information; so check with the experts before experimenting on your own.

Always practice good water safety habits. From 2005-2009, there were an average of 3,533 fatal unintentional drownings (non-boating related) annually in the United States — about ten deaths per day, 2 of which are children under the age of 14. Children should never be left alone near water. Always have a "designated watcher", whose only job is to monitor the children's activities and whereabouts.



## Food Poisoning is No Picnic!

Food Poisoning results when bacteria contaminated food is consumed. Symptoms can be mild or severe and include some or all of the following symptoms: stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Some food poisoning prevention tips to keep in mind while preparing for those outdoor meals include but are not limited to:

- Practice careful personal hygiene when preparing and serving foods. Bring soap, towelettes and or hand sanitizer with you.

- Thoroughly cook all foods according to standard guidelines
- Keep "cold" foods cold and "hot" foods hot before and after serving.
- Do not allow food to sit out for more than two hours.
- Beware of foods on which bacteria rapidly multiply if not properly stored
  - Meats
  - Cream or custard pastries
  - Salad mixtures containing meat, poultry, seafood or dairy (mayonnaise and eggs)

Call the Indiana Poison Center about safe food preparation and food poisoning prevention 1-800-222-1222. Poison Specialists are available to take your call 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year.

## OUCH ... Who "Bit" Me??

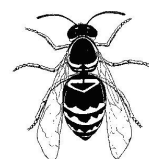
### STINGING INSECTS:



**Honeybees** usually don't sting but when they do, the stinger and poison sac break free and stay in the skin. Never squeeze the skin or use tweezers to remove a stinger. Flick the stinger with a fingernail or gently use the tip of a credit card until the stinger pops out.

**Bumblebees** are large yellow and black bees that don't really like to sting. If they do sting, they don't lose their stingers, so they can sting more than once.

### Wasps, Hornets, and Yellow Jackets



are more likely to sting than honeybees and can sting more than once. In late summer, yellow jackets make up a high number of stings in Indiana. They are often found around trash and food.

2. Worldwide, more people are killed by scorpion bites than by snake bites?

**BITING INSECTS** include mosquitoes, fleas and flies. Insect bites are mostly mild and don't hurt as much as stings. Bites can pass on diseases like West Nile Virus and St. Louis Encephalitis.

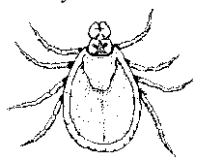


**NON-INSECT BITES:**

**Chiggers** are mites, not insects. Their bite can easily be seen, but the mite itself is so small that you may not see it. Chigger bites are found underneath clothing.



**Ticks** can stay stuck to skin for up to 10 days before dropping off. Ticks spread *Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever* (rare in



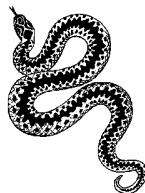
Indiana) and *Lyme Disease*. Check your body and hair for ticks after being in wooded places. To remove a tick, hold the body

close to your skin and pull slowly and gently. If the tick's head breaks off in your skin, see a doctor. Wash your hands and skin with soap and water after removing the tick.

**Spiders:** spider bites usually don't cause bad problems for humans. Spider bites are most likely to cause redness and swelling on your skin. This may last for a few days.



**Snakes:** If a snake bites you, get medical help at once. Rest and don't move the part that was bitten. You may need a tetanus shot. **Never cut the skin or try to take out the poison with your mouth.**



3. Which king of England, who suffered from terminal cancer, was murdered or "euthanized" (depending on opinion) by his own personal physician, at the king's request, via a lethal injection of cocaine and morphine?

Bites and stings can make your skin red and itchy with swelling that lasts up to 5 days. If you scratch, the area can become infected. You can have a bad allergic reaction, even if you've never reacted to stings before. Signs of allergy include hives, flushed skin, itching, feeling sick, fever and trouble breathing. *If you think you're having an allergic reaction, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room at once.*

*Avoiding bites and stings*

- If you're outside, pour drinks from cans into cups before you drink to avoid any insects in the can.
- Don't wear bright clothes in the morning and afternoon. Insects are around then and will be drawn to the color.
- Don't use perfumes or anything else with sweet, fruity or flowery smells.
- Never swat at insects. If an insect thinks you are going to hurt it, it will sting to defend itself.
- Stay away from areas with weeds and blooming plants that bees and wasps like.
- Prevent standing water, which encourages mosquitoes to breed.
- Always wear shoes outside.

*Taking care of bites and stings*

- Wash the skin that was bitten or stung.
- Cool the skin, but don't leave ice on your skin for a long time. Take ice packs off every 20 minutes. Let skin warm for five minutes before putting ice packs back on.
- Elevate the body part that was hurt to cut down swelling.
- Give Benadryl and acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help pain and itching *if the person who was hurt can safely use them*. Calamine lotion and cool cloths may also help.
- Don't scratch or the skin might become infected.

*Anaphylaxis*

Anaphylaxis is caused by allergies to stings and bites. *Anaphylaxis needs to be taken care of at once*. Call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room if a person who is stung:

4. Because of what toxin, the Japanese Emperor is forbidden to eat what meal? Hint: a person who eats it usually stays awake while suffocating to death.

- Gets a rash or itching over most of their body
- Has trouble breathing
- Feels dizzy
- Feels sick or throws up
- Has chest pain

*If you know you are allergic to bee or wasp stings, ask your doctor about an allergy kit to carry with you.*

**INSECT REPELLENT**

Small amounts of insect repellents generally will not have harmful effects. However, DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide), one of the most effective ingredients in topical insect repellents, may be dangerous. Current studies show that it is acceptable to use concentrations of up to 30 percent for adults. The concentration of DEET is proportional to the amount of time it protects. For example, products with concentrations of 10 percent are effective for about two hours; products with a concentration of 24 percent protect an average of five hours.

**SAFETY TIPS**

- Wear clothing that will cover as much exposed skin as possible when outdoors, especially for children.
- Select a product with the lowest concentration of DEET effective for the amount of time you plan to spend outdoors.
- Follow the directions on the label of all insect repellents.

5. What type of poisoning are you suffering from if you experience "dry ice phenomenon" (where hot seems cold and vice versa)?

For a poison emergency, or to request poison prevention materials call 1-800-222-1222

- Wash your hands after using insect repellents and pesticides.

**Sun Screen**

If you're going to be out in the sun, remember the sunscreen. Be sure to read directions and use sunscreen as directed, especially on young children. This prevents nasty sunburns now and lowers the risk of skin cancer in the future.



Look for water resistance. Keep in mind that these products are not water-proof. They will still wear off. But they will last longer than typical sunscreens. Re-apply regularly. A few dabs in the morning will not last the whole day. Follow the directions on the bottle for reapplying – especially after you've been sweating or in the water. A child's delicate skin, if left unprotected, can be damaged in as little as 15 minutes, but it can take up to 12 hours for skin to show the full effect of sun exposure. So, if your child's skin looks "a little pink" today, it may be burned tomorrow morning

To prevent further burning, get your child out of the sun.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**IPC IS GOING VIRTUAL!!!**

The new IPC website is currently under construction. Beginning **September 1, 2013**, we would like to be completely virtual. At that time, all IPC publications will be available on the new website and/or sent electronically. If you would like to be added to the e-mail list, please send an email to **dgeorge-davis@iuhealth.org** with "go green" in the subject line. Thank you for helping us preserve the environment.



**NEW STAFF:**

The Indiana Poison Center is growing. Please join us in welcoming the following new staff:

**Jennifer Sanders** joined the IPC Staff on March 10, 2013. Jennifer has been a part of the IU Health family for over 11 years and came to us from the Emer-

gency Department at IU Health University Hospital.

**Krista Williams, RN** joined the IPC staff on May 20, 2013. Krista comes to us from Eli Lilly, where she worked closely with the field sales reps and health care professionals. She's been an RN for over 12 years, mostly in the hospital clinical setting in Labor & Delivery, Pediatrics & GYN.

*Welcome Jennifer & Krista!!*

Articles from this issue of *Toxic Trivia* may be reproduced in newsletters, etc, as long as:

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**Answers to Quiz:**

1. Ricin. A lethal dose can be as small as a grain of salt
2. True
3. King George V
4. Tetrodotoxin/ Fugu (Puffer Fish)
5. Ciguatera