

Fall & Holiday Edition

Halloween Safety

Potential Halloween Poison Risks

Treats

- An adult should check all treats before they are eaten. Only eat treats in original, unopened wrappers. Discard candy if wrappers are faded, have holes or tears, or if it has been unwrapped. Most poisons or other foreign materials cannot be detected by visual or x-ray inspection.
- Check fruit and homemade treats for punctures or contamination. Allow your child to eat such items only if from someone you know and trust. Fruit can be cut into sections to check for sharp objects.
- Some treats, especially chocolate, can be poisonous to pets.
- Consider giving non-edible treats such as stickers and pencils.

Glow Sticks

Glow sticks and necklaces are popular during Halloween. The active ingredient is dibutyl phthalate, which, in small amounts, is safe. The sticks and necklaces occasionally break or children chew them open. If the contents get on the skin, they can cause irritation and dermatitis. Contact with the eyes can cause severe irritation and watering. Oral ingestion of the contents can cause nausea and burning.

Dry Ice

When swallowed, oral burns (actually frostbite) may occur. Immediate dilution is recommended. Having dry ice in punch is not a problem as long as ice is

not swallowed. Direct contact with the skin can also cause tissue damage. If exposure occurs, wash skin immediately with lukewarm water and call the Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.

Makeup

Look for non-toxic items when choosing Halloween makeup. Other products may contain emollient laxatives, talc or hydrocarbons, which can cause problems. If any makeup is swallowed, treatment depends on amount ingested, ingredients and symptoms.

Costumes

- Wear flame-retardant costumes that are roomy enough to allow a child to dress warmly but not so large that he or she might trip or brush against a flame.
- Choose light colored costumes or use reflective tape to make children more visible.
- Consider using makeup instead of a mask to allow unobstructed vision.
- All masks, wigs and beards should fit securely, allowing for full vision.
- Face paints or makeup should be made from nontoxic material. Wash with soap and water if an allergic reaction develops.
- Make sure accessories, such as swords, are made of soft or flexible material.

Other Halloween Safety Tips

Trick-or-treating

- Feed children before trick-or-treating and give them some candy from home while trick-or-treating to avoid the temptation to eat from their bags.
- Use smaller trick-or-treat bags to decrease the urge to get more candy.
- Carry a flashlight or glow sticks, wear reflective clothing or tape and watch for cars. Finish before dark.
- An adult should accompany young children and visits should be limited

to familiar, well-lit homes.

- Avoid barking dogs or other upset animals.

Home Canning Safety Tips

With summer at an end, many home gardeners will begin preserving the fruits of their labor by home canning fruits, vegetables and meats.

In recent years, home canning has seen a revival, particularly among urban women 39 to 55 who may not have grown up canning at home. The recession has also spurred more people to consider canning the produce they grow.

While home food preservation can save on grocery bills, reduce carbon emission by decreasing the need to transport produce long distances and allow consumers to enjoy produce out of season, there are risks if basic safety precautions are not taken.

The Indiana Poison Center offers the following tips on safely preserving food:

- Be aware of the dangers of botulism. Experienced home canners know that the “bad bug” to avoid is
- *Clostridium botulinum*, the organism responsible for botulism, and the second most common cause of food poisoning in the United States. Symptoms usually show up between 18 to 36 hours after the person has been exposed and include weakness, double vision and difficulty swallowing and speaking. Like all food poisoning, it’s likely to be more dangerous for infants, the elderly, or

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Toxic Trivia



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

TOXICTRIVIA

"Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet Day"

An event to be held at *all Marsh pharmacies*,



- Do you have old and leftover prescription and over-the-counter medicine at home?
- Are you unsure what to do with it?

Don't flush medicine down the toilet or sink – dispose of it safely!

What: "Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet Day"

Where: All Marsh pharmacies

When: Friday, Oct 25, 9am-7pm
Saturday, Oct 26, 9am-5pm
Sunday, Oct 27, 11am-5pm
Monday, Oct 28, 9am-7pm

What kinds of medicine can I bring?

Medicine must be in original container with original label intact

- Pills, capsules and liquids (no aerosols, or inhalers)
- Sharps can be accepted if brought in a hard plastic container
- Medicines that have the words "toxic," "corrosive," "reactive" or "ignitable" on them will not be accepted
- Only one type of medication can be in a single container – *no mixtures*
- No pill organizers will be accepted
- **No controlled or illegal substances** (check with your regular pharmacist if you're not sure whether a medicine is controlled)

For more information, call 317-594-2408

**INDIANA
POISON
CENTER**



people with weakened immune systems. The good news? Botulism requires a very unusual and specific environment to thrive, so by following a few basic safety tips, you can minimize your risk.

- Seek out information on safe canning at www.homecanning.org or www.foodsafety.gov. You can also contact your local Agricultural Extension Office for classes or local resources.

- Select produce carefully, and wash it thoroughly before canning.



- Home canning requires specialized equipment. Do not use pots, pans and jars that are intended for other purposes.
- Use the most current guidelines. Recommendations for safe canning may have changed, especially if the cookbook you are using is old or handed down from family members.
- Don't assume that heat alone will eliminate the threat of botulism. Make sure you are diligent about following canning directions.
- If you suspect you have been poisoned by contaminated food of any kind, call the Indiana Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222** to speak with a poison specialist any time, day or night. The specialist can help you determine if you are in immediate danger, or whether you can care for yourself at home. Some symptoms, such as a fever or blood in the vomit or stool, indicate a medical emergency and should not be ignored.

For further tips on safely storing and preparing food, call the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at **1-888-674-6854**.

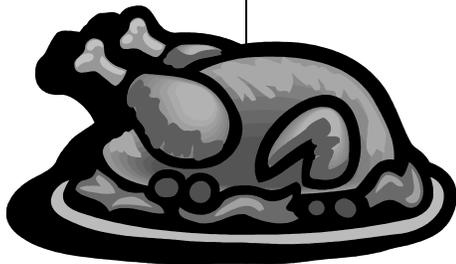
1. Man has been able to domesticate only two insects. One is venomous and the other is not. Name these domesticated insects.

It's Time to Talk Turkey!

It's almost time for family and friends to gather together once again to share some holiday fare.

To prevent food contamination:

- Keep your bird in the original wrapper and thaw on a tray in the refrigerator or in a pan of cold water, (water should be changed every half-hour).
- Make sure the sell-by-date has not expired.
- Defrost a frozen turkey by refrigeration or a cold-water bath. Don't defrost a turkey at room temperature. Bacteria can multiply on outer layers before inner layers have defrosted
- Allow one day for every 5 lbs. in the refrigerator. In a cold water bath, change the water every 30 minutes.
- Don't leave an uncooked thawed turkey out of the refrigerator longer than two hours.
- Use a meat thermometer to check if the turkey is done. The turkey should cook until the internal temperature reaches 180-185 degrees. Pierce the turkey in the thickest area of the thigh, making sure the juices run clear, not pink.
- Never re-freeze a thawed uncooked turkey.



How to store leftovers

Handling cooked turkey incorrectly can result in food-borne illness. Think of the post-cooking stage as a countdown, which begins when you take the turkey out of the oven. From that time, you have approximately two hours to serve it and then refrigerate or freeze the leftovers: the turkey, stuffing, and gravy. Why just two hours? Because bacteria that cause food-borne illness can multiply to undesirable levels on perishable food left at room temperature for longer than two hours.

It's important to take out all of the stuffing from the turkey as soon as you remove the bird from the oven. How you store the leftovers is also important in preventing bacterial growth. Large quantities should be divided into smaller portions and refrigerated in several small or shallow covered containers. Food in small amounts will get cold more quickly.

Leftover turkey will keep in the refrigerator for 3-4 days. Stuffing and gravy should be used within 1 or 2 days. Bring leftover gravy to a rolling boil before serving. For longer storage, package items in freezer paper or heavy-duty aluminum foil and freeze. Proper wrapping will prevent "freezer burn". Frozen cooked turkey should be used within one year. Always use the oldest items first.

Lastly, keep in mind that there may not be anything to celebrate at your family dinner if your young child encounters snacks such as peanuts, raisins, hard candies, cocktail-size hot dogs and hors d'oeuvres - items that pose a choking hazard for very young children. Keeping these items out of the reach of children will prevent unintentional choking.

Thawing times

Weight	Cold Water	Refrigerator
8-12 lbs	4-6hours	1 ½ days
12-16 lbs	6-9 hours	2-3 days
16-20 lbs	9-11 hours	3-4 days
20-24 lbs	11-12 hours	4-5 days

If you plan on cooking a "stuffed bird", stuff it just prior to cooking to prevent bacterial contamination. "Safe" end temperatures for your feast are:

160-165 F	Roasted stuffing
180-185 F	Thigh temperature
170-175 F	Breast temperature

3. What is unusual about the "Royal Mayan" Bee?

Christmas & News Years Holiday Safety

Alcohol

Although alcohol poisoning is common in children year-round, the incidence increases during the holiday season. Children often imitate adults and they will drink partially filled glasses regardless of the contents. Empty beverage glasses and punch bowls that contain alcohol as soon as guests leave and place them out of the reach of curious children.



Children are more sensitive to alcohol than adults. Beer, wine and distilled liquor, such as vodka, whiskey, rum and bourbon contain alcohol. Perfume, cologne and aftershave have concentrated amounts of alcohol. Vanilla and almond extracts have high alcohol content.

Cigarettes and Cigars

Cigarettes and cigars contain nicotine, which can be dangerous to children. Ingestion can result in vomiting, sweating and seizures. Empty all ashtrays at the end of the evening and keep them out of reach of children. It is important to also take caution with e-cigarettes, as the liquid content contains high concentrations of nicotine, which can be highly toxic.

Christmas tree ornaments

Ornaments can be made of glass, thin metal, styro-foam or wood. If a child swallows a piece of an ornament, it could cause choking and/or



2. In what year and in which city, did the first pilot Poison Center begin operations in the United States?

4. In the body, methylene chloride can be converted to what toxic compound?

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

blockage in the intestines. Antique or foreign-made ornaments may be decorated with lead-based paint although lead toxicity is unlikely from a small, one-time exposure.

Holiday Plants

When giving a holiday plant as a gift, always attach the name of the plant. That way, if a child or animal were to eat part of the plant, the Poison Center could be told exactly what type of plant is involved. In a case of plant poisoning, the Poison Center can help with information and management if the name and/or species of the plant is known. The Poison Center cannot identify plants over the phone.

Holly



The stiff green leaves and bright red berries are extremely attractive to children. While holly is toxic, there have been no substantiated cases of death.

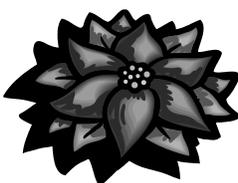
The minimum lethal human exposure is unknown. Call the Poison Center if any are ingested.

Pines, Spruces, Balsam and Firs
Christmas trees and greens mostly cause minor irritation. They are mechanical/foreign body hazards. Aspiration or airway obstruction is a pri-

mary concern. Pinecones are not toxic although contact dermatitis may result from handling. Commercial Christmas tree preservatives usually contain a concentrated sugar solution and are considered non-toxic. Homemade solutions containing aspirin or bleach can be potentially harmful if a large amount is swallowed.

Poinsettia Plants (Christmas flower)

Contrary to earlier belief, poinsettias are safe to have in the home during the holidays. Small ingestions do not result in significant symptoms.



Poinsettia plants

have a mild irritant, which can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. The milky sap from the flower may cause skin irritation.

Mistletoe

The berries, leaves and stem are all considered toxic. Contact the Poison Center if ingestion of any amount occurs.



Jerusalem Cherry

Contains bright orange to scarlet colored berries. The entire plant is toxic. Call the Poison Center if ingested in any amount.

Bittersweet

All parts are considered toxic. The un-

ripe berries contain the highest concentration of Solanine, which cause low heart rate, sedation, and headaches.

Non-Toxic plants to give during this season:

- African Violets
- Boston Fern
- Christmas Cactus
- Coleus
- Jade
- Snake Plants
- Spider Plants

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
from the
Indiana Poison Center!!

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

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Answers to Quiz:

1. Honey Bee & Silk Worm
2. Chicago, IL 1953
3. It doesn't sting. It bites!
4. Carbon Monoxide