

Fall & Holiday Safety

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Halloween Tips for Safe Trick or Treating

Listed below are some of the products that the Indiana Poison center receives calls about at this time of year:

- Gourds: non-toxic.
- Pumpkin: Non-toxic, including seeds.
- Hair coloring gel: minimal toxicity in small amounts.
- Dry Ice: frostbite hazard only.
- Glowsticks/Glo-jewelry: minimal toxicity in small amounts.
- Make-Up (general): Non-toxic – large amounts may have laxative type effect.
- Paraffin Wax: A laxative effect only.

The following are simple precautions that can be taken to help keep children safe this Halloween.

- An adult should always accompany children.
- Don't trick or treat at strangers' homes.
- Don't eat treats until they have been inspected (feed youngsters a large meal ahead of time to help prevent this).
- Be sure that all candy is wrapped and properly sealed.
- Check all packages and products for signs of tampering. Don't eat any-



thing if its package has been opened in any way or the product looks tampered with.

- Don't accept or eat loose candy (jellybeans, M&M's) unless in a sealed package.
 - Never accept fruit or homemade treats such as popcorn balls, even if they are wrapped up.
 - X-rays of candy show only metallic foreign objects. Glass and poisonous substances will not be detected.

If you suspect a problem or a potential poisoning, contact the Indiana Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.

Playing it safe with eggs

The holiday season is just around the corner, so it's time to look at that essential ingredient for baking – the egg! It's important to realize that even eggs with clean, un-cracked shells can harbor Salmonella – bacteria that can cause intestinal infection. So, to avoid the possibility of food-borne illness, fresh eggs must be handled with care. Knowing how to buy, store, handle and cook eggs – and foods that contain them – is the best way to avoid illness.

Eggs should be kept refrigerated and cooked until the yolks are firm. All foods that contain eggs should be thoroughly cooked. It's important to follow these instructions for everyone but especially for individuals who are vulnerable to food poisoning. Those most at risk include children, the elderly and anyone with a weakened immune system due to medical conditions such as diabetes or HIV, or treatments like chemotherapy or immune suppression for organ transplants.

Buying eggs:

- Only buy eggs that are kept in a

refrigerator or refrigerated case.

- Open the carton and make sure the shells are clean and free of cracks.
- Refrigerate eggs promptly.
- Store eggs in their original container and use them within 3 weeks.

Cooking eggs:

- Hands, utensils, equipment and kitchen surfaces should be washed with hot, soapy water both *before* and *after* coming into contact with eggs and foods that contain eggs.
- Cook eggs until both the yolk and white are firm – scrambled eggs should *not* be runny.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure that dishes containing eggs are cooked to 160 °F (72°C).
- If a recipe calls for raw or under-cooked eggs – for example salad dressing – use either shell eggs that have been treated to destroy Salmonella or pasteurized egg products. A growing number of retailers now carry treated eggs and pasteurized products are widely available.

Serving eggs:

- Serve eggs and foods that contain eggs immediately after cooking.
- If serving a buffet, keep hot egg dishes hot and cold dishes cold.
- Hot egg dishes can be refrigerated for later use, but should be thoroughly reheated to 165°F (74°) before serving.
- Cooked eggs should not sit out for more than 2 hours.
- Refrigerate and use eggs that have been hard-boiled within one week after cooking.

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Toxic Trivia

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



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- Use frozen eggs within 1 year and do not freeze them in their shells. Whole eggs can be frozen with the yolks and whites beaten together – egg whites can be frozen by themselves.
- Leftover egg dishes should be refrigerated promptly and used within 3-4 days. Large amounts should be divided into smaller quantities to allow for quick cooling.

Other egg tips:

- Eggs cooked for picnics should be packed in an insulated cooler with ice or frozen gel packs to keep them cool.
- Carry the cooler in the air-conditioned interior of the vehicle – not in the hot trunk.
- When taking cooked eggs to work or school – pack them with a small frozen gel pack or a frozen juice box.

Happy (and safe) Hunting!

Hunting, while a rewarding hobby for many, is full of inherent dangers, and not just for the prey.

There's a reason so many hunters wear brightly colored safety gear when they head for the woods each fall, just as there's a reason why many states offer hunting safety classes every year.

But some of the greatest dangers hunters face during hunting season are not obvious to the naked eye.

With the start of hunting season in many states this month, the American Association of Poison Control Centers offers a few tips on making hunting season less toxic:

1. This toxin is 500x more lethal than cobra venom and 1500x more lethal than cyanide.

- Gun bluing protects guns from rust and corrosion. But those same products can be fatal to a small child who might mistake this liquid for a soft drink. Gun bluing contains a variety of acids and other chemicals which can cause serious burns and damage to several of the body's organs. Store bluing and other rust and corrosion prevention chemicals in a locked cabinet or out of a child's reach.
- Keep children away from gun powder solvents and gun lubricants. Those products contain alcohols and petroleum, which are also dangerous if swallowed by a young child. Store gun powder solvents and gun lubricants in a locked cabinet or out of a child's reach.
- Be wary of animals that could prey on you. Snakes, spiders and ticks all pose a possibly fatal threat to hunters. Wear long sleeves and long pants to guard against bites and keep an eye out for these sometimes tiny threats. Remember that in some parts of the country, snakes burrow, while in other parts of the country, snakes hibernate. If you're in an



area where snakes burrow, be particularly aware of the possibility for stepping on one.

- Field dress meat as soon as possible. Cool meat as soon as you can to improve the meat's quality and decrease the chances of food poisoning. If you freeze your game, thaw and rinse it before cooking. Cook it thoroughly and never allow cooked game to sit for prolonged periods or without refrigeration.

Don't forget the invisible killer, carbon monoxide, which is a major contributor to hunters' deaths each year. Hunters who camp and use

heating devices in enclosed spaces or who go back to their vehicles to warm up and accidentally fall asleep become victims of carbon monoxide poisoning. Don't burn heaters in unventilated spaces, don't warm your hands and feet at the exhaust pipe of your vehicle and always remember that fresh air is the best treatment for carbon monoxide exposure.

Safe Use of Hand Sanitizer

The Indiana Poison Center offers the following tips to help use hand sanitizers safely and prevent the spread of germs this flu season:

- Keep hand sanitizers out of reach of children.
- Avoid super-size containers. Consider buying a small container or continuously refilling a travel-size container so kids have access to a smaller quantity of the gel.
- Offer guidance about how to use the product. If you send your child to school with a small bottle of hand sanitizer, have a conversation about what the product does and how to use it properly. Consider carefully whether your child is responsible enough to use the product properly without adult supervision.
- Make sure children fully rub the product in, until it dries, to help prevent eye or mouth exposure.
- If a child does get a lick of hand sanitizer, expect him or her to be fine. At the same time, it takes less than a teaspoon for an infant to become intoxicated or poisoned. In toddlers, as little as a tablespoon can be harmful. Call the Indiana Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222** if you have any concerns.
- Call IPC if you think someone got hand sanitizer in the mouth or eyes. Poison experts will assess the size of the patient, the amount of hand sanitizer and give fast treatment advice. If it's available, opt for soap and

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

water to kill germs. Hand sanitizers should be a second choice if soap and water are not available.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. This is how germs are spread.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. Keep away from others as much as possible to avoid making others sick.

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 in the refrigerator for every 5 lbs. 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

3. During the months of May and June 1985, unpasteurized orange juice contaminated with the *Salmonella* organism sickened 63 visitors to which popular American tourist spot?

of the thigh, making sure the juices run clear, not pink.

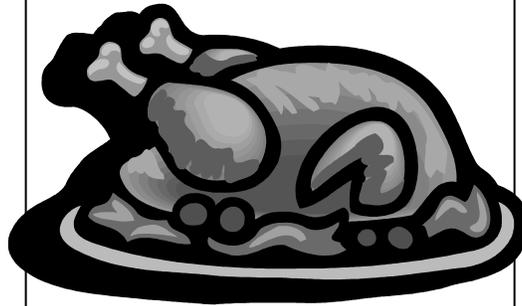
- Never re-freeze a thawed uncooked turkey.

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



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

4. In 1905, which popular store catalogue offered for 69 cents, a bottled antidote for addiction to opium or morphine?

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

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



5. In France in 1952, 234 babies became ill and 69 died when they were dusted with a baby powder that due to a labeling error, contained which toxic substance?

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

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, styrofoam or wood. If a child swallows a piece of an ornament, it could cause choking and/or 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.

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.

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.



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. Ricin. A lethal dose can be as small as a grain of salt
2. True
3. Walt Disney World (Florida)
4. Sears Roebuck
5. Arsenic