

TOXIC TRIVIA

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Spring Safety

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Spring Break Safety

Feeling the "winter blues"? Too much work and not enough play? Perhaps it's time for Spring Break! Ah, yes... Spring Break! The time when college campuses start clearing out for the annual pilgrimage to warm weather destinations. For spring breakers (and parents of spring breakers) there are important pieces of information to keep in mind before taking off for fun-filled days of play.



Do us all a favor (including yourself) and party smart. Be responsible. Pace yourself if you choose to drink, and avoid hard alcohol or other drinks that are powerful and have fast effects. (And remember that drunks = easy targets, for thieves and sexual predators) Also be aware of alcohol poisoning.

According to a University of Wisconsin study, 75 percent of college males and 43 percent of females reported being intoxicated on a daily basis during spring break. If you do decide to drink, know the liquor laws of wherever you'll be vacationing. Drinking & driving is always a dangerous situation, so avoid this by having your safe mode of transportation home planned before you go out.

Contents

Spring Break Safety.....	1
Pets & Plants	2
Protecting Your Children from Spring Hazards.....	2
National Poison Prevention Week	4
Trivia answers.....	4

Drinking + sun can equal a bad sunburn and an even worse hangover. Sun can maximize the effects of alcohol so keep this in mind if you party on the beach. Take it slow and stay hydrated by drinking lots of water. If you start feeling faint or light headed, get shade and water immediately.

How Alcohol Affects Us

Alcohol also affects different people in different ways. Some of the characteristics that determine the way alcohol affects you include:

- Gender
- Mood
- Body Weight
- Type of Alcohol
- Full/Empty Stomach
- Speed of Consumption
- Use of Medication or Other Drugs

But for most people, the effects of alcohol are determined by simple volume.

How does impairment happen? Let's take a look.

The stomach actually has a relatively slow absorption rate; it is the small intestine that absorbs most of the alcohol. That's why we want to keep the alcohol in the stomach as long as possible by eating food, which dilutes the alcohol and keeps it from entering the small intestine so quickly. Once alcohol gets into the bloodstream it moves through the body and comes into contact with virtually every organ. However, some of the highest concentrations, and certainly the highest impact, are caused by the alcohol that reaches the brain.


We need to know that the body is quite efficient when it comes to dealing with alcohol. The liver is designed to metabolize the alcohol as we drink it. Enzymes break down the alcohol into harmless products and then it is excreted. However, the liver can only handle so much

alcohol at a time. For a person of average weight and body type, the liver and small intestine can handle alcohol at a rate of about one drink per hour.

If a person drinks at a faster rate than one drink per hour, the alcohol simply stays in the body, waiting its turn to be metabolized. Since there is more alcohol in the body than can be metabolized, the result is increasing levels of intoxication. Alcohol Poisoning is a real occurrence, as some students are drinking heavily and quickly and becoming medical emergencies, or worse – fatalities. Alcohol poisoning occurs when someone puts a large amount of alcohol into their system. There are a lot of reasons why people drink; to be social, they like the feeling of being impaired, to be less self-conscious, to forget their problems, - we could go on and on. But there is a difference between drinking and drinking way too much.

Almost all of us have heard that alcohol is a drug, but many of us don't think of the act of drinking alcohol as putting a drug into our bodies. It is important for people to understand that alcohol abuse impairs their judgment and their peripheral and central nervous system.

Alcohol poisoning is an overdose of alcohol. Alcohol poisoning is deadly. The brain begins to shut down involuntary functions that regulate breathing and heart rate sometimes resulting in death. The amount of alcohol that causes alcohol poisoning is different for every person. It is not possible to accurately predict for each person what amount will cause them to overdose.



Toxic Trivia

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

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When we hear of a person who has died as a result of alcohol poisoning, typically one of two things happen. The person stopped breathing. The depressant level of the alcohol was so high that the drinker simply stopped breathing and his or her heart stopped beating; **OR** The person choked on their vomit. The drinker passed out, was laying on their back, threw up and choked on his or her vomit.

Protect Your Pet from Poisons in the Yard

Outdoor enthusiasts who are also pet owners are delighted with the onset of spring., enjoying their outdoor living spaces while watching their pets run and play. The Indiana Poison Center would like to offer some tips on how to keep your pets safe this spring, by alerting you to some of the potential harmful substances, flowers and plants that are dangerous, particularly to dogs and cats.

Many of the calls received this time of year involve pet ingestions of yard and garden products that may have harmful chemicals and/or ingredients. Here are a few examples of such harmful products:

Mulch Products: Cocoa bean mulch is made of discarded hulls or shells of the cocoa bean, which are by-products of chocolate production. "Chocolate-like" smells often attracts dogs and may tempt them to eat the mulch. These hulls contain theobromine and caffeine. Determining specific levels of these ingredients is very difficult. Many of the products contain low levels; however varieties with higher levels can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, an abnormal heart rhythm, seizures and in extreme cases, death. Since it is not apparent how much of these toxins are contained in the mulch, it's best to keep dogs a safe distance from the mulch, to always supervise your pet outdoors, or to just not use this kind of mulch at all.

1. Socialite Claus von Bulow was accused of trying to kill his wife Sunny in 1980 by what means?

Fertilizers, Soil Additives and Pesticides: While fertilizers are typically fairly safe for pets, those that contain blood meal, bone meal, feather meal and iron may be especially tasty ... and dangerous for dogs. Large ingestions of these products can cause gastrointestinal obstructions and pancreatitis. Ingestion of pesticides, especially those containing organophosphates (often found in rose care products) can be life threatening, even in small amounts not use this kind of mulch at all.

Compost: Gardeners love their compost; however it can be toxic to pets and wildlife, so please keep your compost pile fenced off. As the organic matter decomposes, it commonly grows mold, some of which produce toxic mycotoxins. Moldy food or compost ingestion can result in sickness and physical distress in as little as 30 minutes. Symptoms include agitation, panting, drooling, vomiting, tremors and seizures. Prompt veterinary treatment with appropriate supportive care usually results in a good prognosis.

Flowers and plants: Some of the most dangerous springtime threats in pets in the yard are common flowers and plants.

1. Lily of the Valley - An early spring time favorite, Lily of the valley contains cardiac glycosides, which are also used in many human heart medications. When eaten by dogs or cats, this common perennial can cause vomiting, diarrhea, a drop in heart rate, severe heart rhythm disturbances, and possibly seizures.
2. Crocuses - There are two types of crocus plants: one blooms in spring and the other in fall. The spring plants are more common and cause gastrointestinal upset accompanied by vomiting and diarrhea in cats and dogs. The fall crocus is highly toxic and cause severe vomiting, gastro-



intestinal bleeding and multi-system organ failure with bone marrow suppression. Symptoms may be delayed for days.



If you witness your pet ingestion a crocus, and are not sure which variety it is, seek immediate veterinary care.

3. Lillies - Cat owners, beware of lillies.

While some types, such as the Peace,



Peruvian and Calla, only cause minor symptoms when eaten, other varieties of the true lily family are deadly and highly toxic to cats, including Tiger, Asiatic, Easter, Japanese Show and Day lilies. Ingesting small amounts (ie: eating a few as two petals/leaves or exposure to pollen) can result in severe kidney failure. Even the water in the vase containing true lilies is considered highly poisonous, as the toxin in the plant is water soluble. If a cat consumes any part of these lilies, seek immediate veterinary care.

For a list of **Pet specific** Toxic and non-Toxic Plants, please visit: <http://www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants>

Protect Your Children from Spring Hazards

We all enjoy the beauty plants bring to our homes and yards. At the same time, it's important to realize that young children tend to think of poison as something which looks, tastes and smells bad

2. Which insect is responsible for more deaths world wide than any other?

Children under the age of six may not see plants, which are “pretty poisons” as a danger. Young children are likely to be flowers and berries that are produced by plants.

In reality, plants, including both house and garden varieties, are among the top ten agents that cause poisoning in young children. In the Midwest there are hundreds of poisonous plants that are capable of causing illness or injury in dozens of ways. The potential symptoms of toxicity depend on the specific plant involved. Most exposures occur in the spring and summer months and they make up nearly ten percent of all poison exposures in young children reported by poison centers each year. Here are some helpful tips to keep your family safe from plant poisons:

- Keep indoor plants out of the reach of children and pets and pick up any plant parts that fall to the floor.
- Identify *all* plants in your home and yard. If you’re not sure what a certain plant is, take a sample to a nursery or greenhouse, as it’s nearly impossible to identify a plant from a description over the phone. An adequate sample for identification includes not just a leaf, berry or flower, but a substantial piece of the plant, showing the leaves, branches, bark, flowers, fruit and any other part of the plant that could help with identification.
- Label all plants with their proper name (preferably the common name *and* the botanical name). Write it on tape and use permanent ink. Make a sketch of your yard and garden, showing location and name of trees, bushes and plants. Post this “map” in a convenient place in your home, so you can use it to identify plants, if necessary.
- Keep children and pets away from plants with berries. Because of their

3. If one was playing Scrabble and spelled the word POISON, with no bonus points, how many points would one receive?

color, shape, and texture, berries are very attractive to young children. Berries are found on garden and wild plants and they may also be part of dried flower arrangements.

- Remove all mushrooms in the yard, especially after rainy spells in spring and fall. Most reported deaths from plants result from eating wild mushrooms. Identification of mushrooms growing outside is very difficult - it is best to assume all varieties are toxic. **Call the poison center if any part of a wild mushroom is eaten.**

Contact the Poison Center even if you just *suspect* a poisoning. Plant material may be digested slowly and symptoms of poisoning can be delayed. Don’t wait for problems to develop, call the Poison Center immediately at **1-800-222-1222**.

For those of you who enjoy gardening, keep these tips in mind to help protect you and your family.

- Wear protective clothing when spraying insecticides and pesticides
- Do not spray upwind when it is windy
- Keep children and pets away from sprayed areas until dry or for the time specified on the label
- Take care not to spray near children’s toys, play gyms, sandboxes, bikes and pet food dishes

Store products in their original containers— *you* may know that the soda bottle in the garage contains weed-killer, but to your thirsty child on a hot day it may look like something good to drink. The container label also contains important information on how to use the product correctly and should be followed.

Most importantly – **never leave a sprayer unattended**.... not even for a few seconds. Remember, children act fast! Keep in mind that plants can also be a hazard for children, including the seeds which may be mistaken for candy - many are coated with fungicides or in-

4. What was the name of the 19th century artist that died from substances in the drink Absinthe, now known to be toxic?

secticides. As you add new plants and flowers to your yard, be sure to label each one clearly with the plant name. If your child does eat part of a plant it is essential that you be able to tell the poison specialist exactly what was eaten; it is very difficult to identify a plant by description alone over the phone.

Poisoning is, of course, only one aspect to keep in mind when trying to keep your children safe. Buckets of water filled with sweet smelling liquid cleaners may be a potential poison hazard, but they also present a real danger for



drowning. Be sure to check all swing sets and other playground equipment your child uses. Swing sets should be well anchored and maintained and have chains and seats that are intact and sound.

While you are doing your best to make *your* home a safe place for your child, it is just as important to remind grandparents, other family members, neighbors, babysitters and any other people that your child spends time with to follow these important safety tips.

5. What US president signed the Public Law 87-319, which designates annually the third week in March as National Poison Prevention Week?

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

National Poison Prevention Week

Why is it necessary to devote one whole week every March to promoting poison prevention? A look at the numbers provides an explanation. In 2012, the Indiana Poison Center received 63,941 requests for assistance (averaging 175 calls per day). In addition, the staff of the Poison Center placed 74,774 calls to patients and health care professionals for follow-up

(averaging 204 calls per day). The goal of National Poison Prevention Week is to raise awareness about what kinds of things can potentially be poison and to teach ways to keep children and others safe from poisons.



During National Poison Prevention Week, March 17-23, the **Indiana Poison Center** encourages you to take some simple steps to help keep your family safe.

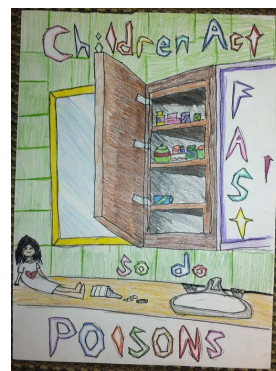
- Choose products and medicines with child resistant packaging whenever it is available
- Replace child-resistant caps tightly *every time* you give or take medicine or use a product

- Lock medicines and household products away from children – products placed up high may not be secure since children climb
- Return medicine and household products to a locked storage place *immediately* after use
- *Always* read the label before giving or taking a medicine or using household products – never guess about how to use a product
- Take medicines where children can't watch – they learn by imitating
- Put the number for the **Indiana Poison Center, 1-800-222-1222** on or near every telephone
- Make sure babysitters and family members caring for your children also have the emergency number posted in their homes

Poison can be found everywhere. Items commonly found in and around the home can easily become a danger to young children if they are left in the open within easy reach. Such items include:

- Medicines (prescription and over the counter)
- Cleaning products (drain openers, toilet bowl cleaners, oven cleaners, rust removers)
- Automotive products (windshield washer fluid, antifreeze)
- Hydrocarbons (gasoline, kerosene, lighter fluid, furniture polish, hair and body oils)
- Pesticides

Call **1-800-222-1222** even if you just *think* that someone has been poisoned. Don't wait to see if the person gets sick, call the experts at the Poison Center immediately



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Answers to Quiz:

1. Insulin injection
2. Bees
3. Eight points P=3, O=1, I=1, S=1, O=1, N=1
4. Vincent Van Gogh
5. President John F. Kennedy