

Poison Lesson: What is a Poison? When you don't know-ask someone first!

Objectives:

1. To define a poison as something that can make you sick and hurt you
2. To familiarize children with some common household poisons in order to prevent poisonings
3. To describe poisons as things that should not be played with, tasted, smelled, or put on the skin or in the eyes
4. To teach children that if they do not know if something is a poison, to ask an adult before they touch it
5. To extend the poison prevention message to the children's homes by sending home a letter to the parents, children's activities, and a poison proofing the home checklist

Teachers: you will have to make photocopies of the letter to the parents, children's activities, and home checklist for each child in your class

Discussion: ask questions, and guide the children's answers to talk about poisons.

1. What is a poison?

A poison is something that can make you sick if you taste it, smell it, or get it on your skin or in your eyes. We should never play with, touch, smell, or taste poisons.

Grown-ups sometimes use poisons to do things around the house, like cleaning and washing clothes. Poisons can be things used to kill bugs, keep our cars running, and keep our yard looking nice. Even things we use to make us look and smell nice can be poisonous. Perfume, nail polish remover, makeup, and mouthwash can all be poisonous. Even medicine and vitamins can be poisonous if they are used in the wrong way.

Poisons can be safe as long as they are used in the right way.

Many other things can be poisonous, and they can be poisonous in many different ways. If you do not know if something is a poison, ask a grown-up before you touch it.

2. Tell me different ways that things can be poisonous?

- Eating them/Tasting them (medicine, plants, cleaning supplies, automobile supplies....)
- Touching them (poison ivy, irritating chemicals....)
- Smelling them (fumes, smoke, irritating chemicals....)

3. Name some things that might be poisonous? (at home, at school, at a friends house, outside...)

- Have children name different things that they think are poisonous
- Try to talk about all different types of poisons (older children can tell you where each of the poisons could be found)
 - i. Medicine/pills
 - ii. Automobile supplies
 - iii. Cleaning supplies
 - iv. Soaps/Hygiene supplies/Makeup
 - v. Plants/Mushrooms/Berries
 - vi. Spiders/Snakes
 - vii. Arts and Crafts/School supplies
 - viii. Gases/Carbon monoxide/Smoke

4. Tell me where you might find a poison inside or outside of your home?

Poisons can be found almost **EVERYWHERE!** In almost every room in your house; the kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living room, basement, attic, and closets, even in the garage and outside in the yard or on the playground. They can also be found at school, at your friend's house, and at your relative's house, like your grandma and grandpa's house. Remember, if you do not know if something might be a poison, ask a grown-up before you touch it.

5. Who is this? (Point to the picture of Officer Ugg)

This is Officer Ugg. Officer Ugg is a policeman, but he is a special kind of policeman. We can also call Officer Ugg our friend, but he is a helping friend, not a playing friend. He is a friend/policeman that helps to stop poisonings. He has his hands over his mouth to tell you that when you see him, **STOP!!!!** The item that he is on is not safe to put in your mouth. It is a poison. He can be found on many different things. Anytime that you see him, you know that you should **STOP** and not touch the thing that he is on.

6. Who wants to play a game?

Take the two grocery bags, one labeled with Officer Ugg, and the other with a smiley face. Hold up pictures of poisons and non-poisons (or teachers could bring real products from home).

Have the children tell you which bag the picture should go in. If it is a poison (something that you should not touch, taste, smell, or eat), it should go in the bag with Officer Ugg on the front. If it is safe to eat, touch, smell, or taste, it should go in the bag with the smiley face on the front.

Optional Activities:

- **Poison patrol:** give each child/pair of children an Officer Ugg sticker. Have them go around the classroom/school and put it on something that is a poison
- **Poison word hunt** (single copy is provided; teachers will need to make photocopies for the children in their class)
- **Poison maze** (single copy is provided; teachers will need to make photocopies for the children in their class)
- **Poison look-a-likes:** Teachers can bring in poisons and non-poisons from home that resemble each other. Teach the children that many poisons look like things that are safe to eat (i.e. red hot candy and red decongestant pills, parmesan cheese and cleanser, baby cereal and dish washer detergent, mouth wash and juice/Kool-Aid, M&M's and iron pills, mothballs and mini-marshmallows, chocolate bar and chocolate laxative, apple juice and pine cleaner, toothpaste and medicated cream, etc...)

Be sure to send a letter, activities, and poison checklist home with each child and encourage parents to continue teaching their children about poisons at home. (Teachers will have to make copies of the packets for each child in their class)