

Sadie Says...

Frequently asked questions about older adult issues

**Q:** How can I make my house safe and hazard-free for my young grandchildren? It's been so long since I've had little ones around, I'm not sure how to make my home "baby proof."

**A:** Glad you asked.

We know many older adults have young grandchildren who come to the house for an occasional visit. It's easy to forget that we have to get the house ready as a hazard-proof area before the little visitors arrive. Remember, it's not just medicines that are poisonous to children. Everything from makeup to cleaning products can be considered harmful if ingested. Toddlers are especially curious, and have been known to get into things and put them in their mouths.

Here's some tips on what to do to hazard-proof your home:

**Cleaning Products** -- Cleaning products and aerosols should be put away either in a locked cabinet or high out of a child's reach. Keep in mind that many kids climb countertops and toilets to get to items, so make sure you are storing these items up high enough. Do not put cleaning products in old soda bottles or containers that were once used for food. Do not keep cleaning supplies - including dishwasher powder, liquid, or pods - under the sink or in an unlocked cleaning cabinet. Use safety latches for all cabinets containing hazardous substances.

**Laundry Supplies** -- Laundry supplies are a common source of poisoning. Poison control centers last year responded to more than 12,000 calls regarding young children getting into laundry detergent pods. The bright colors in the packet make many young children think they are getting into candy. Make sure to keep laundry supplies out of sight and in a locked cabinet. If you have children visiting who are under age 6, consider using a traditional detergent rather than pods.

**Bathrooms** -Our bathrooms are actually full of items that can be poisonous to children. Many brands of mouthwash contain substantial amounts of alcohol. Make sure to keep mouthwash out of kids reach. Toothpaste, if ingested, could also be poisonous and cause stomach issues. Any of the hygiene items typically kept in a bathroom - shampoos, soaps, and lotions - can be harmful if ingested. Make sure to put these items away, out of reach or up high.

**Purses** - Many ladies set their purses down on countertops or tables when they get home, but this means purses are out in the open and easier for kids to access. There are many potential poisons that ladies keep in their purses - makeup, nail polish, deodorant, hand sanitizer, etc. It's best to hang the purses up on a high hook or put them away, out of sight.

**Wax Candles** - There are many candles and wax tarts that both smell and look like baked goods. Young children can accidentally put these in their mouths, thinking they are food.

Make sure to put these items out of their sight.

---- more----

## Sadie Says -poison-p 2

Although we all know that medications are obviously items we should keep out of a child's reach, many grandparents keep medications on their nightstands and forget to remove them before grandchildren come over. Make sure you don't forget to do a sweep of the house and put the medicines up high before grandchildren come over.

If you suspect your grandchild has gotten into poison, call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. If the child has gotten into poison and is not acting normally, call 911 or go to the emergency. Be sure to bring the bottle or container of the pills or liquid that the child took.

Sadie Says is provided by the Lycoming County HealthImprovement Coalition