

Off To Grandmother's House We Go—Safely!

(NAPSA)—Visits with grandparents can create wonderful, warm memories that last a lifetime. To keep these visits safe and enjoyable for everyone, pathologists recommend that you keep household hazards, such as cleaners and medications, out of a child's curious reach.

Each year, poison control centers nationwide manage more than one million situations where a child has potentially been poisoned. In 94 percent of these cases, the child was in a home setting. The majority of these cases involved cosmetics and other personal care products, followed by cleaning products and pain medication, such as aspirin or acetaminophen.

According to William V. Harrer, MD, a New Jersey pathologist and grandfather, it's important to childproof your home each and every time your grandchildren pay a visit. "Not only should you put away your breakable knickknacks, but you also should put away any potential hazards," says Dr. Harrer. "Look at your home from a child's point of view—get down on your hands and knees and try to see what your grandchildren will see in each room."

In the bathroom, keep all prescription and over-the-counter medicine in cabinets well out of children's reach. Cosmetics and other toiletries should be placed out of sight and also out of reach. In the kitchen, keep dish detergents and other cleaning supplies in cabinets secured with safety latches. In the laundry area, move detergents and bleach to higher, inaccessible shelves. Also, do not leave a purse unattended—curious children will quickly find any medication or cosmetics inside. It's important to move all of these potentially dangerous items out of sight as well as out of reach, because children can be determined to get to "interesting" things they see up high. If they can't see it, they won't try to get it.

When a Child Visits . . .

- Keep medicines, cleaners and cosmetics out of reach
- Use safety latches on cabinets and drawers
- Avoid taking medication in front of a child



Adults also should avoid taking medicine in front of a child. Children love to mimic adult behavior, and would not hesitate trying out a grandparent's "candy." If a child sees an adult's medication, stress that the medication is for adults only, and that it *isn't* candy.

The children most at risk are those between the ages of one and three. Not only are children at these ages more curious and more apt to put new things in their mouths, but they are also more likely to suffer damaging effects than an older child. Some medications, such as iron supplements, can be lethal for small children.

Pathologists, doctors who specialize in caring for patients through laboratory medicine, know that poisons work quickly. "If you suspect that a child in your care has been poisoned, call your local poison control center or 911 immediately," says Dr. Harrer. "Not all poisonings should be treated by inducing vomiting, so it's important that you ask for help before taking any other action. Be sure to give the center the child's age and weight and what was ingested so that they can give you the right advice."

In the case of poison control, prevention is the best medicine. Taking a few minutes to remove household hazards can save a child's life.