

Child Health Notes

Promoting early identification and partnerships between families, primary health care providers & the community.

Distributed by the Lewis County Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and Parent to Parent. **Contributors:**
Washington Department of Health and the University of Washington Children with Special Health Care Needs.



More than half the calls received by poison centers across the country involve children under the age of six. Parents and caregivers must be vigilant about reading product labels to determine what items need to be kept well out of the reach of tiny hands.



Office: (360) 736-9558
Cell: (360) 269-2269
email:
rbryan@reliableenterprises.org



Hand Sanitizers vs. Soap and Water

Hand sanitizers kill harmful bacterial, such as streptococcus, salmonella, staphylococcus, E. coli and shigella. These products do not claim to kill viruses.

Adapted from article by Alan Greene, MD

In alcohol-based hand sanitizers (like Purell), the active ingredient is ethyl alcohol. Alcohol is a natural antiseptic that has been used in the medical field for over 100 years because it kills germs in seconds, without water, and evaporates quickly, leaving no residue on the skin. It physically destroys the germs. The use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers has been shown to reduce illness in places where germs are commonly spread, such as in schools. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the use of alcohol or alcohol based products in hospitals, home, work, and schools to stop the spread of germs. For more information about the CDC's recommendations, please visit their Web site: www.cdc.gov

The downside is that hand sanitizer gels and wipes contain a surprising amount of alcohol (Purell and Germ-X contain 62 percent ethyl alcohol). A child who swallows enough of such a product could experience intoxication and possible alcohol poisoning. "Ingesting as little as one to two ounces of this product could be fatal to a toddler" says Heidi Kuhl, a health educator at Central New York Poison Control Center. Other medical technicians maintain that a child would have to ingest considerably more hand sanitizer than is typically used in a single application for alcohol toxicity to be a likely result.

Another source states that even though bottles of topical anti-bacterials do carry explicit warnings about the danger they pose – "Keep out of reach of children" and "If swallowed get medical help immediately".— unlike cleaning supplies and numerous other products commonly used in the home, hand sanitizer isn't generally thought of as something that presents a poison danger to children – people regard it the way they do hand lotion, something that can safely be left on the counter or nightstand. Such products shouldn't be left within easy reach of a small child about. Children can and do get into the darnest things.

More than half the calls received by most poison centers across the country involve children under the age of six. Usually the reported poisoning incidents result in mild symptoms, but many carry the potential for severe injury or even death. Parents and caregivers must be vigilant about reading product labels to determine what items need to be kept well out of the reach of tiny hands.

According to a 1992 Clinical Pediatrics article, youngsters are especially at risk of ingesting poisons from ordinary household products due to four factors:

- Children are naturally curious about almost everything, including taste, smell and texture of products;

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- Children learn about the world through smell, touch and taste. Bright colored liquids, spray containers, pills and leafy or flowering plants are all attractive lures to children.
- Children lack the experience and knowledge to distinguish poisons from harmless substances. Children may think that harmful substances such as cough syrup or shampoo are safe to drink because they resemble beverages or because their appearance, taste or odor is similar to that of a consumable product: medicine tablets that taste and look like candy, mouthwash that looks like fruit punch, etc.
- Children imitate the behavior of adults and mimic what they see their parents or caregivers do, such as taking medications, drink colored liquids and using spray chemicals. The mechanics of spray containers are of special interest to curious children.

All that said, a 2005 study of 292 families by Children’s Hospital of Boston in which half the subjects received hand sanitizers and half received literature advising them to wash their hands frequently, found that those who used the hand sanitizer gels experienced a 59 percent reduction in gastrointestinal illnesses and that increased use of sanitizers corresponded with a decreased spread of contagions, including those resulting in respiratory illnesses.

Source: www.snopes.com/medical/toxins/sanitizer.asp

Warning: If small children begin to exhibit the following symptoms, get them to a doctor. Staggering, slurring speech, rapid breathing, extreme sleepiness, extreme excitability. Yes, the common symptoms of drinking too much alcohol.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

	Emergency	911
Local:	Providence Centralia Hospital 24 hr. Emergency	1-360-330-8516
	Providence Centralia Hospital	1-360-736-2803
	TTY for Hearing Impaired	1-360-330-8513
	East Lewis County—Morton General Hospital	1-360-496-5112

Regional/ National :	Poison Control Center	1-800-222-1222
	Providence St. Peters Hospital - Olympia (toll free)	1-888-492-9480

For Children with Special Health Care Needs or Disabilities:

	Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital—Tacoma	1-800-552-1419
	Children’s Hospital—Seattle	1-866-987-2000
	Seattle Children’s Hospital (non English)	1-866-583-1527
Internet:	Mary Bridge Children’s Hospital—Tacoma	www.multicare.org
	Children’s Hospital—Seattle	www.seattlechildrens.org
	Seattle Children’s Hospital (non English)	
	Center for Disease Control (CDC)	www.cdc.gov

LOCAL RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

For children under age three:	Contact:
Living in Centralia Chehalis School Districts only	Growing Together 748-2277 or Student Support 807-7245
Living in any Lewis County School District	In-tot Developmental Center 748-4359 or 1-888-548-4359
For children age three and older:	Contact:
Within Centralia Chehalis School Districts	Local school district
Outside Centralia Chehalis School Districts	Lewis County Special Education Coop 748-3384 or local elementary school

PARENTS ! Please come to the **Lewis County Interagency Coordinating Council** Meets first Wednesday of each month at DDD , 1000 Kresky Ave., Centralia. Meeting focused on services provided for families of children birth to 5 with developmental delays. Seats open for parents to attend, listen and participate in how to better serve families. Mileage reimbursement and FREE childcare is available when you call in advance. For more information contact Rayna Austin at 360-748-4359.