



The Toxic Toddler: One Pill Can Kill

Children are the victims in 68% of all poisoning exposures. Most of the reported exposures involve children under 6 years of age. Young children often explore their environment by putting objects into their mouths. Because of the potential for a child to come in contact with medications in the home, it is important to be aware of the toxic potential of medications that members of the home may use, and to keep them out of the reach of children. The following is a list of medications that can be harmful if only a small amount (1-2 tablets) is ingested.

♦ Antidepressants and Antipsychotics

-Can cause seizures, heart arrhythmia's, low blood pressure, abnormal muscle movements, and coma.

*Examples: imipramine, desipramine, chlorpromazine (Thorazine®), and thioridazine (Mellaril®)

♦ Heart Medications

1. Beta-Blockers

-Can lower blood sugar, blood pressure, and heart rate, cause seizures, heart rhythm problems, and coma.

*Examples: propranolol (Inderal®) and sotalol (Betapace®).

2. Calcium Channel Blockers

-Can lower blood pressure and heart rate, cause heart problems, and seizures.

*Examples: verapamil (Calan®, Covera®) and nifedipine (Adalat®, Procardia®)

3. Clonidine (Catapres®)

-Can lower blood pressure and heart rate, cause difficulty breathing, hypothermia, pupil constriction, and coma.

4. Quinidine (Dura-Tabs®)

-Can lower blood pressure, cause heart rhythm problems, breathing difficulties, seizures, and coma.

♦ Narcotic Medications

-Can cause breathing difficulties, hypothermia, pupil constriction, seizures, and coma. Keep **all** pain medications out of reach of children.

*Examples: Methadone, Codeine, Oxycodone (Oxycontin®), and Hydrocodone (Vicodin®).

♦ Antimalarial Medications

-can cause seizures, visual disturbances, and heart function abnormalities.

*Examples: chloroquine (Aralen®), hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil®), and Quinine.

♦ Theophylline (Theo-Dur®, Uniphyll®, Slo-Bid®)

-Can cause heart rhythm abnormalities and seizures.

◆ Diabetic Medications

-Of concern are medications taken by people with Type 2 diabetes to lower their blood sugar level. Drugs classified as "sulfonylureas" are of particular concern.

Insulin is not a concern since it is inactivated when taken orally.

-Can lower blood sugar to dangerous level

*Examples: glyburide, glucotrol, Amaryl, glipizide, Glucovance, Diabinese

◆ Diphenoxylate (Lomotil®)

- Used to treat diarrhea.

-Can cause breathing difficulties and coma.

Toxic effects may not be immediate, need to observe child for several hours.

◆ Topical Products

1. Methyl salicylate

-A concentrated form of salicylate (the main ingredient in Aspirin).

-Can cause nausea, vomiting, hyperthermia, blood sugar abnormalities, weakness, ringing in the ears, fast breathing rate, seizures, and coma.

*Products containing methyl salicylate: Ben-Gay, Icy Hot, and Oil of Wintergreen liniment.

-As little as $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoonful of Oil of Wintergreen can be fatal!

2. Camphor

-An anesthetic used in over-the-counter (OTC) topical rubs or to relieve chest colds.

-Can cause breathing difficulties, seizures, and coma.

*Products containing camphor: camphorated oil, Campho-Phenique®, camphor spirits, Ben-Gay Children's Rub®, Vicks Vaporub®, Children's Soltice Quick Rub®, Heet®, and Sloan's Liniment®.

-1-4 teaspoonfuls can be fatal if ingested by a small child

3. Benzocaine

-A local anesthetic found in many OTC preparations, including teething gels.

-Applying too much of the product in the mouth can lead to ingestion, which may cause a decrease in oxygen getting to the tissues.

-Can cause difficulty breathing, heart rhythm problems, seizures, shock, coma, and possibly death.

*Products containing benzocaine: Baby Orajel®, Baby Orajel Nighttime Formula®, Baby Anbesol Gel®, Anbesol Regular Strength®, Anbesol Maximum Strength®, Lanacane Spray®, Americaine Topical Anesthetic First Aid Ointment®, Vagisil Cream®, throat lozenges, mouth washes, and hemorrhoid creams.

4. Lindane

-Available in lotions, shampoos, and creams to treat lice and scabies.

-Also found on flea collars, pet shampoos, and household sprays.

-Can cause seizures, hyperthermia, difficulty breathing, and low blood pressure.

