

## Common Holiday Plants Can Be Toxic

- Several **holiday plants** you may want to avoid having in your home, and the dangers associated with them if ingested, include:
  - mistletoe – nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, drowsiness, blood pressure changes, hallucinations and seizures
  - azalea and rhododendron – nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cardiac affects and seizures
  - amaryllis, Christmas berry, holly, and winter broom – nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
  - Jerusalem cherry – headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
  - Christmas pepper – burning sensation
  - chrysanthemum – skin rash

**Evergreens**, such as balsams, cedar, fir, juniper and pine, also can be hazardous. Exposure to large amounts of their toxic oil could cause stomach irritation and other negative reactions.

Though **essential oils** from these plants are often sold as aromatic fragrances, even a small droplet of the oils in their pure form can damage the lungs if inhaled.



**MYTH:** Poinsettias are the most dangerous item in the household during the holiday season.



**FACT:** Poinsettias are not toxic. However, do not allow any children or pets to consume large amounts of any plant.

## First Aid for Poisoning

### Poison in the Mouth:



- Call the poison center, whether the poison was swallowed or not.
- Do not make the person vomit**, or give the victim something to eat or drink unless the poison center tells you to.

### Poison on the Skin:



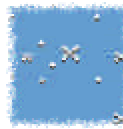
- Take off clothes that have poison on them.
- Rinse the skin very well with water. Then wash the skin with soap and water.

### Poison in the Eye:



- Remove contact lenses (if worn).
- Rinse the eyes with water for 15 minutes.
- Open and close the eyes while rinsing.

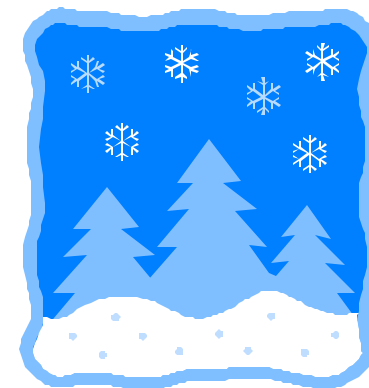
### Poison in the Air:



- Open windows and doors to let in fresh air.
- Leave the area and move to a place where you can breathe fresh air.
- Help others leave the area, but be careful not to breathe the poison yourself.

Call the Illinois Poison Center as soon as possible at 1-800-222-1222. You may be told to call your doctor, hospital or 911.

## Winter Poison Prevention Safety Tips



[www.IllinoisPoisonCenter.org](http://www.IllinoisPoisonCenter.org)  
1-800-222-1222



## Tis' the Season...for coughing and sneezing!



Households tend to stock more medications for treatment of cold and flu symptoms during the wintertime. Make sure your medicine cabinet is safe for your family.

- \* Always read the label before giving or taking medicine.
- \* Use the measuring device that is packaged with the medicine – and remember, more does not necessarily mean better.
- \* Never call medicine candy or make a game out of taking it.
- \* Never give a child someone else's medicine.

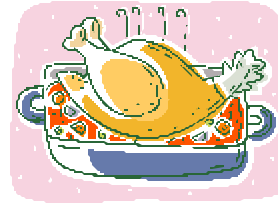
## Don't Let Alcohol Become A Party Hazard

Alcohol can be very dangerous to small children. For example, ingesting three ounces of hard liquor (i.e., whiskey, vodka or gin) is potentially fatal to a child weighing 25 pounds. Be aware of children consuming unfinished alcoholic beverages left out during holiday parties and celebrations. You also should be aware that alcohol is a key ingredient in mouthwash, cough preparations and colognes.



## Safe Food Preparation

In order to prevent your family and friends from becoming ill from spoiled or mishandled foods, ensure that your holiday meals are safely prepared.



- 1. Wash your hands thoroughly with hot, soapy water before preparing any food and after handling raw meat, poultry, fish or eggs.
- 2. Store raw food below cooked food in the refrigerator so raw food cannot drip into cooked food and contaminate it.
- 3. Wash counters and utensils thoroughly before and after preparing foods.
- 4. Use separate cutting boards for meats, poultry and fish.
- 5. Cook food adequately – rare meats have a higher risk of containing unhealthy levels of bacteria. Cooking meats to the recommended internal temperature kills bacteria.
- 6. Put food away no more than two hours after a meal or buffet.



## Beware of Holiday Decorations

- **Angel hair** consists of spun glass, which can penetrate the eyes and mouth upon contact, causing severe irritation and pain.
- **Christmas tree ornaments** can be a choking hazard.
- **Snow globes** are glass or plastic domes filled with water. The snow is made from a non-toxic chalk-like or plastic substance. However, the fluid contained in the globe could become contaminated with harmful bacteria over time, and cause vomiting and diarrhea if ingested.
- **Snow spray** used to decorate windows, mirrors and trees can cause eye damage if sprayed directly into the eye from a pressurized container.
- **Oil candle lamps** contain liquid fuels composed of hydrocarbons. When products containing hydrocarbons enter the lungs, severe respiratory problems, which can lead to death, may develop. All hydrocarbon-containing products are very dangerous and should be kept out of children's reach.
- **Fireplace powders and logs** that burn different colors contain heavy metals, such as lead, copper, barium and selenium. Ingestion of such metals can cause intense stomach and intestinal upset.

