The Northern New England Poison Center Wants You to Have a Holly, Jolly Holiday

Nobody expects to call the poison center during the holidays, but poisonings sometimes happen because of changes in routine or increased distractions this time of year. Plan ahead and program your phone with the poison center phone number, 1-800-222-1222. Having this important number saved in your phone could be the best gift you give this year—it could prevent a trip to the hospital or save a life.

There’s no place like home for the holidays
Suitcases and purses often contain medication or other toxic substances. Keep them out of the reach of children and pets if you are traveling or having guests.

- Mouthwash, liquid hand sanitizer, perfume and cologne may contain alcohol. Even small amounts can affect a child.
- Personal care products, like toothpaste and soap, can cause vomiting or diarrhea.
- Eating small amounts of tobacco products can be harmful causing nausea, vomiting and potentially seizures.
- Watches, cameras, hearing aids, games and calculators can contain button batteries (flat, coin-like batteries). If swallowed, a button battery will usually pass through the body in the stool, but it can get stuck in the throat or stomach, which can cause serious burns.

O Christmas tree, o Christmas tree
The Christmas tree is the center of the holiday celebration in many homes. Keep your tree beautiful and your family safe during the holidays.

Hang decorations out of the reach of young children and pets. Tinsel and some ornaments are choking hazards, and older ornaments may contain lead. Angel hair can irritate the mouth or eyes. Some bubble lights contain methylene chloride. If a light is opened or nibbled on it can cause skin or mouth irritation.

Follow the directions when using snow spray to avoid breathing in the fumes or getting it in your eyes.

I saw mommy kissing Santa Claus
Common holiday plants include mistletoe, poinsettia, Christmas cactus, holly and Jerusalem cherry. Most can cause symptoms if swallowed by small children or pets.

- Swallowing mistletoe, poinsettias, holly or Jerusalem cherry can cause an upset stomach, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Touching mistletoe or a poinsettia can cause a rash for some people with sensitive skin.
- Christmas cactuses are not poisonous.

Walking in a winter wonderland
People often use salt on their driveways and sidewalks to prevent slips and falls. This salt can be dangerous to animals and children. Keep an eye on kids who are playing in salted areas, and keep the salt container out of their reach. Consider using sand instead.
Have a safe and fun holiday season. The Northern New England Poison Center is available 24/7. Call 1-800-222-1222 if you think someone has been poisoned, or if you just have poison-related questions. You can also visit www.nnepc.org to chat live with a specialist. TTY and language interpretation services are also available.

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