

# Unintentional Poisoning

Unintentional poisonings involve a person poisoning themselves without wanting to cause harm to their body<sup>1</sup>.

[www.iccwa.org.au](http://www.iccwa.org.au)

In Australia, each year about 4,700 cases of poisoning in children under the age of 15 years result in hospitalisation<sup>2</sup>.



## Quick facts

- Historically pharmaceutical and illicit drugs have accounted for 90.1% of all unintentional poisoning deaths in WA<sup>3</sup>.
- Unintentional poisoning accounts for about 8% of injury related deaths in WA<sup>4</sup>.
- In 2006, unintentional poisoning accounted for 701 registered deaths in Australia<sup>5</sup>.
- Children 0-4 years are most at risk of unintentional poisoning<sup>6</sup>.
- Females are twice as likely as males to die from unintentional poisoning<sup>5</sup>.

## Storing your chemicals safely

- Lock all chemicals, cleaning products and medications in cabinets, out of reach from children and pets.
- Read labels and place in appropriate places (ie. in a cool, dark and dry area).
- Always keep chemicals in the original packaging.

## Poisoning prevention tips

- Buy medications and chemicals with child resistant seals.
- Always read the instructions before using a new chemical.
- Avoid taking medicines in front of children.
- Know how and where to dispose of chemicals and old or unused medicines safely.
- Know which plants in your garden are poisonous.
- Keep poison helpline numbers handy.

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## In your garden – general prevention tips

Know which plants in your garden may put you, your children or your pets in danger if consumed.

Plants with a strong smell, milky sap, red berries or self-sown seed are often poisonous<sup>7</sup>.

### For a list of poisonous plants visit:

<http://www.anbg.gov.au/poison-plants/index.html>

## Disposing of poisons and chemicals safely

Some poisons and chemicals are hazardous, and can be dangerous to your family. If chemicals are passed their use by date, or you no longer have a use for them, take them to your nearest drop-off facility where they will be disposed of safely.

A list of drop off facilities in Western Australia can be found at <http://www.zerowastewa.com.au/>.

For further information on common household hazardous wastes that should be disposed of safely please visit [www.dec.wa.gov.au](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au) or contact the Department of Environment and Conservation on 08 6467 5000.

If chemicals are passed their use by date, or you no longer have a use for them, take them to your nearest drop off facility where they will be disposed of safely.

## Disposing of old medications

### Return Unwanted Medicines (RUM) program

The RUM project is a free disposal service for out-of-date and unwanted medicines. The program aims to reduce the likelihood of poisoning from medicines. Contact your local pharmacy for further information about the program.

## Information and support

### For poisoning first aid call:

Emergency assistance from Ambulance, Police and Fire services: 000

National Poisons Information Centre: 13 11 26

### For further information on preventing poisoning in children contact:

Kidsafe WA: 08 9340 8509 or 1800 802 244 (country callers) or visit [www.kidsafewa.com.au](http://www.kidsafewa.com.au)

## References

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ICCWA is the peak not for profit organisation involved in injury prevention and community safety promotion in Western Australia. Our mission is to reduce the incidence of injuries and their effects on the community.