



**PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA**

Central Michigan District Health Department  
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8409  
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org)

**To: Local Newspapers**

**From: Lindsey Penney, Health Promotion & Preparedness Intern**

**RE: Holiday Safety and Poisoning Prevention**

**Release Date: November 2010**

**Holiday Safety and Poisoning Prevention**

The holidays are right around the corner. It is the time of year for joy, celebration, and giving thanks. But while enjoying this time with family and friends, it's also important to think about poisonings and safety, especially in children.

According to Safe Kids USA, each year more than 1.2 million kids ages 5 and under are poisoned and for every 10 poisonings, about 9 occur in the home.

Things that may cause poisoning in the home include:

- medicines, including pain relievers
- cosmetics
- detergents and other cleaning supplies
- plants, such as holly and mistletoe
- alcohol

There are ways to keep kids safe during the holidays, and even after the celebrations are over. Things that can be done to prevent poisonings include:

- Locking up medicines and cleaning supplies out of a kid's sight and reach; remember that homes you might visit may not be completely safe for kids.
- Cleaning up food and alcohol right after a party
- Having one person keep an eye on each child during a gathering.
- Making sure there are carbon monoxide detectors in the home and testing them every month

It's also important to recognize the symptoms of poisoning: nausea, vomiting, pain, trouble breathing, seizure, or confusion. But symptoms may not happen right away. If the person has no symptoms but has swallowed something poisonous, a poison control center should be called or a visit to the nearest hospital might be needed. Keep the number for the Poison Control Center next to the phone; the national hotline number is 1-800-222-1222

As the holidays approach, it's also important to keep food safe when making meals. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) sites that there are four basic steps in keeping food safe to prevent food poisoning:

- **Clean:** Make sure to wash hands and food-contact surfaces with soap and water often. Bacteria can spread in the kitchen and get onto sponges, cutting boards, and counter tops.
- **Separate:** Don't let bacteria spread from one food to another. This is especially true for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- **Cook:** Make sure food is cooked to proper temperatures. Foods are fully cooked when they are heated for a long enough time at a high enough temperature to kill off bad bacteria.
- **Chill:** Refrigerate food quickly. Party platters, meat, poultry, seafood, dairy products, eggs and cooked vegetables cannot be left out above refrigeration temperatures (40°F). Don't store these foods in the garage or on the porch which may not be cold enough. Refrigerating foods quickly keeps bad bacteria from growing.

This article has been brought to you by the Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the residents in Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties.

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