

POISONology

SAFETY & FIRST AID TIPS FROM THE ARIZONA POISON AND DRUG INFORMATION CENTER

Gummy vitamins: Too much of a good thing



Here at the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center, we receive quite a few phone calls from concerned parents about their children getting into the gummy vitamins and taking more than recommended. Children's multivitamins have traditionally been made to be great-tasting in order to encourage children to *want* to take them; however, this can also pose the problem of children trying to eat them as a treat.

It is very easy to think of vitamins as safe because they contain nutrients that are a natural part of our daily nutrition. Unfortunately, they can be harmful, because taking too much of certain vitamins is sometimes dangerous. With that said, all vitamins (especially the gummy or chewable vitamins that taste like candy) should be kept where children cannot reach them when you are not watching.

The most dangerous ingredient in multivitamins is iron. Iron is an extremely important nutrient in our body, but too much can also be deadly. Luckily, many of the tasty children's vitamins do not contain iron, which makes them a little safer to use and keep around the house. However, there are still children's vitamins that do contain iron, as it is a very necessary nutrient.

We do not want to discourage the use of multivitamins containing iron, but rather warn you to **take extra precautions** when having them in the home. It is wise to check the package ingredients of your child's multivitamin and see whether or not it contains iron. Putting these vitamins not only out of reach, but in a place where the child does not know where they are, can prevent accidental poisoning. A more serious precaution is to lock them in a cabinet or box.

Always feel free to call us at the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center at any time, day or night, with your questions about vitamins or any other products.

Call the toll-free national hotline at 1-800-222-1222 to reach your local poison center. If you live in Arizona outside of Maricopa County, this number will get you to our experts at the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center in Tucson.