

JANUARY 2025

THE POISON PREVENTION SCRIPT

Welcome to The Poison Prevention Script

Hello and welcome to the first issue of The Poison Prevention Script, a monthly newsletter authored by the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center's Community Outreach Coordinators.

About the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center

The Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center (AZPDIC) is one of 55 poison centers in the United States. The AZPDIC serves all counties in Arizona except Maricopa County which is serviced by our sister center. Our staff includes toxicologists and pharmacists who are certified Specialists in Poison Information. Specialists manage cases related to various exposures including medicine, plants, household/personal care products, bites and stings, and much more. Our services are available 24/7/365 and are completely free and confidential.

The Purpose of the Newsletter

Our goal is to provide readers with valuable information on preventing poisonings and envenomations and offer timely information on recent poisoning trends and seasonal risks. In each issue we will also highlight the impactful work that our center does in the communities we serve. Through this newsletter we aim to equip readers with the knowledge necessary to stay safe from poisonings and envenomations.

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Medicine Cabinet Declutter

As the new year is getting started, many of us may feel inspired to refresh or reorganize different aspects of our home. One area often overlooked in this seasonal purge is the medicine cabinet where expired/unneeded medications and other products can accumulate. So, why is it so important to maintain this area of your home? Each year, medicine exposures are one of the most common exposures our specialists manage. Reasons for exposure can range from taking the wrong medication to accidental ingestion among children and even taking multiple medications with the same active ingredient. Cleaning out your medicine cabinet should be at the top of your New Years checklist because a cluttered medicine cabinet can add to the risk of poisoning in various ways:

- Medicine Mix-ups: A person may accidentally grab the wrong bottle of medicine or take a medication that they no longer need to be taking.
- Unused prescription medications have the potential to be misused
- Medications can become less effective or even harmful if taken once they have expired.

Tips to clean out your medicine cabinet:

- Check expiration dates on all products (prescription/over-the-counter medications, vitamins, supplements, herbal products).
- Dispose of any products that you no longer use or need even if they have not expired.

Proper Disposal:

- Take expired or unwanted products to a local disposal site in your community.
- Keep an eye out for Prescription Drug Take-Back days. These typically take place twice a year in April and October.
- If you cannot go a disposal location, utilize Detera bags to dispose of medications safely at home.
- Practice safe at-home disposal techniques
 - Needles and Syringes: Place needles in plastic container with a lid, secure lid with duct tape, label container "Do not recycle", place container in trash
 - Liquid Medications: pour liquid into container, mix in used coffee ground/kitty litter/soil, secure lid with duct tape, place container in trash

Medicine Disposal Locations



<https://www.azdhs.gov/gis/dump-the-drugs-az/>

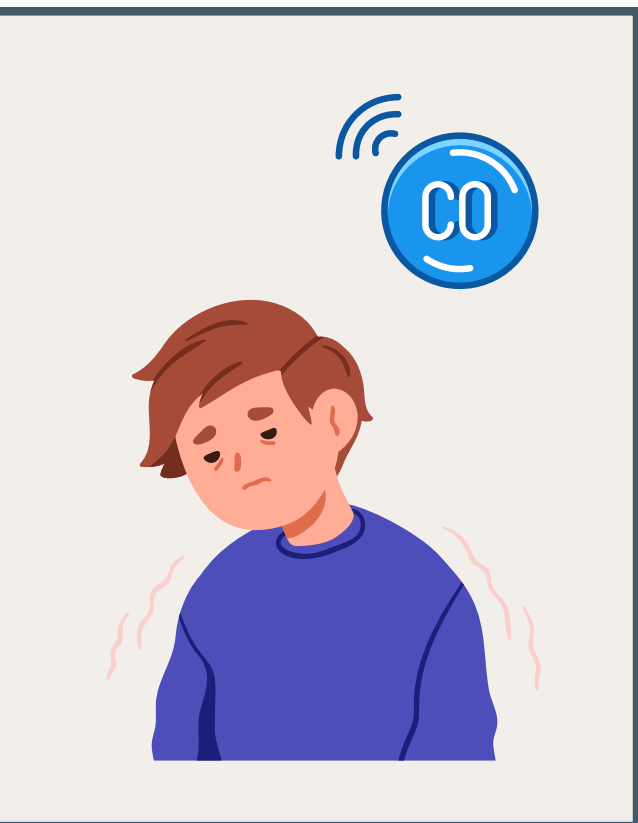
Scan the QR Code or visit the website above to find the nearest disposal location.





Toxic Trends: Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Over the holidays there were news reports of multiple carbon monoxide (CO) deaths in the United States. Being that we are in the middle of the winter season, taking precautions to prevent carbon monoxide poisonings is especially important during this time as people are using things like fireplaces and heaters to keep warm. Typically, our center sees a peak in carbon monoxide related cases during colder months. Last January, the AZPDIC managed about 120 cases related to carbon monoxide. To prevent CO poisoning, ensure your home has carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of the home and near bedrooms. Symptoms of CO poisoning include: headache, shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, unconsciousness, and fatigue. If multiple people in the home experience these symptoms or if symptoms disappear when a person goes outside of the home this could be a telltale sign that symptoms are due to carbon monoxide exposure.



In the Community: the AZPDIC Outreach Program



The best way to prevent a poisoning or envenomation is to be educated about the potential risks, how exposures occur, and the best prevention practices. This is the focus of the AZPDIC's public outreach program. Our Community Outreach Coordinators provide public poison prevention services to all 14 counties in our service area. We conduct outreach in various ways including participating in health fairs/special events, giving presentations at schools, meeting with local community organizations, distributing educational materials, and publishing educational content on social media.

In future issues of the newsletter we will highlight specific outreach that our Community Outreach Coordinators participate in.



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Staff Spotlight: Meet the authors of The Poison Prevention Script



Heather Doss, MPH, MS

Heather has been at the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center for two years. She earned her Master of Public Health from the University of Arizona. Some of Heather’s outreach interests include reaching rural and Spanish-speaking populations. She also enjoys educating the community about the venomous critters we have in Arizona.



Cori Cantin, BSPH, CHES

Cori has been with the Arizona Poison Center as an educator for two years. Her background is in Public Health with an emphasis in health education and promotion. Although never a big fan of venomous snakes or arachnids, one of Cori's favorite parts of working with the poison center is educating the community on how to prevent a bite or sting (and dispelling misinformation surrounding these desert creatures!)