



# TIPS FOR SAFELY USING AND STORING HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS AND PESTICIDES

*Toxic substances can be found in many of the common products used around the home, including oven and drain cleaners, laundry detergents, floor and furniture polish, paints, and pesticides. Depending on the individual, exposure to a toxic substance may result in no ill effects, effects that are reversible or effects that have permanent consequences. At high to extremely high doses (much higher than the average person can consume on a regular basis), a toxic substance might be able to cause birth defects or other serious outcomes including brain damage, coma, or death.*

- Follow the storage instructions as listed on the product label.
- Always keep products in their original containers with the lids on tight. Never use emptied beverage or food containers, which could be mistaken by children and others to still contain a food or beverage. Also, by keeping products in their original containers, the label can be referred to for proper and safe use.
- Never spray or store household cleaners or pesticides near pet food or water dishes or in cabinets where human or animal food or medicine is stored.
- Keep all products out of the reach of children and pets. Keep all pesticides and harmful household cleaners in a locked cabinet. If your child has gotten into household chemicals or pesticides in the past, be especially careful about storing products safely away.
- Periodically conduct a home survey of all household cleaning and pesticide products—check for loose caps and properly dispose of out-of-date products. If the label of a container is damaged and can no longer be read, consider the product harmful or out-of-date and dispose of it properly.
- To properly dispose of leftover or unwanted household products or pesticides, call your local solid waste management authority, environmental agency, or health department. Many communities offer a "hazardous waste collection day." Never dispose of these products by pouring them on the ground, in a stream, down the sink, into the toilet or down a sewer.
- Store flammable products outside your living area and away from other appliances, such as heaters, furnaces, outdoor grills, which could cause the product to catch on fire.
- Keep all medicines out of the reach of children. Buy only small quantities in child-resistant packaging. Never refer to medicine as "candy." Never give or take medication in the dark. Keep in mind that even though over-the-counter medications can be purchased without a prescription, some products can be dangerous to pets and children if swallowed – even in small quantities, such as Visine and aspirin.
- **REMEMBER:** If a child is exposed to or accidentally swallows a potentially poisonous substance, call a poison control center. If the person is convulsing, stops breathing, or loses consciousness, call 911.

Source: Cleveland Clinic