

Poison safety during the winter months

Cough and Cold preparations

Winter in South Africa brings coughing, colds and flu and more medication enters the household! A wide range of colourful medications tempts young children who spend most of their winter days and nights indoors:

- Store all medication in original containers, lock medicine away and keep out of the reach of children, even between uses.
- Make sure that you read the labels correctly before using a medicine, and measure correctly!
- For fever use a digital thermometer because glass mercury thermometers may break in a child's mouth. Spilled mercury requires special clean up to avoid contaminating your home.

Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Winter increases the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide is a clear, odourless and potentially fatal gas produced by home heating systems, hot water heaters, faulty chimneys, paraffin room heaters, gas stoves, fireplaces, charcoal grills and car exhaust. Signs of CO poisoning are similar to the signs of flu: Headaches, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and confusion.

- Never burn charcoal inside a house or garage.
- Never use a gas oven to heat a house or apartment or use unvented fuel-burning devices indoors.
- Never run a car in a closed garage.
- Clean and inspect fuel-burning appliances regularly.
- Check for proper ventilation! Don't keep your house completely shut up, even in winter!

Petroleum products

Lamp oil/paraffin is used more frequently in the colder months of the year.

- To prevent a poisoning they should be locked away and kept out of the reach of children.
- Keep these products in the original containers, never store in everyday containers such as water bottles, or cool drink bottles.
- When accidentally ingested, do not make the person vomit. Do not give them anything to drink or eat.

Call the Poison Information Helpline: 0861 555 777