

Protect Children from Accidental Poisoning

Children of all ages are naturally curious, and young children especially have a tendency to put things in their mouths. Unfortunately, homeowners typically store a vast array of poisonous products under the kitchen sink and in similar areas within easy reach of children.

The result is an astounding **2.3 million** accidental poisonings in the United States each year. Most (64%) of these poisonings happen to children under the age of six. Boys are especially at risk.

Approximately half of all poisonings are caused by swallowing *medicines*, especially analgesics like aspirin and acetaminophen. *Cleaning substances* such

as bleaches and detergents are the next greatest cause of accidental poisonings, followed by *cosmetics* and *personal care products*. Other products children may ingest or spray on themselves or friends include *pesticides*, *dyes*, *lighter fluid*, *gasoline*, *anti-freeze*, and *pool chemicals*.

To help prevent these poisonings, it's a smart idea to install child-resistant latches on all cabinets you use to store medicines, cleaning agents, and other products that would cause problems if

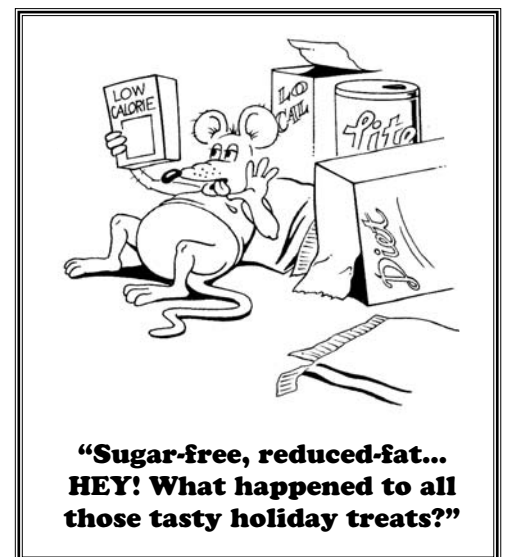


they were swallowed, sprayed in eyes, or contact skin. Also strongly consider moving these products to a higher, less accessible cabinet. Because you use our professional services, fortunately you can get rid of most or all pesticide containers. It's also a good idea to install a lock on utility cabinets, garden sheds, and any areas that store poisons. Don't take chances!

These steps are especially important if you have young children, or if children ever visit your home.

Green Pest Prevention Tip of the Month

Inspect around the bottoms, tops, and sides of all exterior doors for gaps where pests and cold air can get in. Weather stripping becomes old and brittle with age, and starts deteriorating—replace it with fresh material. Install tight-fitting door sweeps or door shoes under the doors.

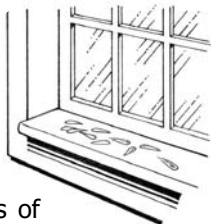


**"Sugar-free, reduced-fat...
HEY! What happened to all
those tasty holiday treats?"**

Watch for Termite Swarmers

One way homeowners discover they have termites is when they find winged reproductive termites, called swarmers. During swarming season, hundreds or even thousands of termites with wings make a mass exodus out of the colony and take to the air. Usually this happens after a rain as the temperatures begin to warm and the days lengthen, but it can happen at other times as well.

Once these termites emerge from their nest, they begin flying, but since they are weak fliers they are mostly carried wherever the wind blows them. They quickly pair up, pry off their wings, and retreat to a cozy dark place where they mate and start a new colony. Swarmers that emerge indoors are attracted to bright lights and are often found around windows and lights. Finding termites or their wings



indoors is almost always a sign that the house is infested and being attacked by termites.

Termites in periods of low rainfall are less likely to swarm. In those cases they often go deeper into the ground, waiting for more favorable conditions. Also, only mature colonies produce swarmers. So you may not see swarmers or other signs of termites, but still have termites from one or more colonies eating away at your home. A professional inspection is the best way to determine if your home is being slowly destroyed by termites.

Call us if you haven't had a recent inspection, or if you find swarmers or other signs of termites, so we can schedule a professional inspection. Finding infestations early and eliminating them before they do further damage can save you hundreds to thousands of dollars.



A New Wasp is Spreading

The *European paper wasp*, AKA the dominulus paper wasp, was first spotted in the United States in 1981. Since that time it has spread to Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Unlike native paper wasps, the European paper wasp is much more aggressive in defending its nest—more like a yellowjacket. Wherever it goes, this new wasp drives out native paper wasps. It also is much more



European paper wasp

likely to eat fruit like grapes and cherries at harvest time, not only damaging the fruit, but stinging people harvesting the fruit.

Mighty Mice OH NO!

Researchers studying enzymes in mice were able to breed a race of 'super mice'. These mice can run nonstop for up to six hours and cover a distance of three miles before they need a rest.



According to a recent article in the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, an unusually high level of the enzyme PEPCK-C in their muscles is what allows the mice to perform these incredible feats of endurance.

The mice also live longer, eat 60% more, are more aggressive, bite more often, and keep breeding even in their old age.

Hope they keep these under better lock and key than the African bees!

Pest Trivia

Two high school students in Big Sandy, Texas, were bitten while in their classroom by a venomous snake that the teacher had misidentified as nonvenomous. The students were handling what they were told was a rat snake, but really was a highly poisonous cottonmouth water moccasin, when it bit both of them. They were rushed to the hospital for treatment and have since recovered.

Your Questions Answered

Q. Do Pet Cockroaches Cause Allergies?

A. *Madagascar hissing cockroaches* are kept as pets by some people because they are large (between 2 and 3 inches long and 1 inch wide at maturity), easy to maintain, and make unusual hissing sounds. Unfortunately, researchers recently reported in the journal *Mycoses* that they found 14 different kinds of mold on and around this species of cockroach. Several of the molds were associated with allergies and others can cause secondary infections if they enter the lungs or an open wound. The molds were found in both the cockroach feces and on their bodies.



Hissing cockroaches like moist living environments, which create a perfect breeding ground for molds. If you insist on keeping these cockroaches as pets, be sure to wash your hands after handling them, and clean their cages frequently.

Common pest roaches can also cause allergic reactions, but unlike hissing cockroaches, the strongest allergens come not from molds associated with these roaches, but from their cast off skins, body parts and droppings.

21st Century Plague Discovered

A study of rodents in Taiwan discovered that some were carrying *Bartonella* bacteria. The finding of these bacteria in rats raises concerns because the bacteria are considered important newly emerging pathogens.

First discovered in the 1990's, *Bartonella* bacteria can cause serious health problems in humans, including heart disease and infections of the spleen and nervous system. Apparently the bacteria are being spread from rat to rat, and from rats to humans, by flea bites.

Dangerous Pests on Planes



Not too long ago the popular movie *Snakes on a Plane* came out. In the movie, poisonous snakes were unleashed in an attempt to eliminate a key witness on his way to a trial. In real life, while *Snakes on a Plane* makes for an adrenaline-packed story, there are in fact a variety of other serious, and sometime dangerous, pests that make professional pest control on planes essential.

One big worry for airlines is *rats* and *mice*, especially because these pests like to gnaw on things. Large airplanes have over one million parts, plus miles of wires and cables. The wires are well-protected against many threats, but a persistent rodent can get into tight places and gnaw on a wire, easily causing a failure of some sort. That's why sighting a rat or a mouse on a plane can cause the plane to be grounded.

Planes traveling through other countries can pick up additional non-native stowaway pests that pose health hazards. Dengue-carrying *mosquitoes* can fly into the plane, *fruit flies* and *cockroaches* can hide in food carts, luggage can be a source of pests, and people can also bring in blood-sucking *bed bugs*, *lice* and *ticks*.

While poisonous snakes are fortunately rarely encountered pests on planes, airlines have had to develop strict pest management procedures to deal with pests. This includes frequent and regular inspections for pests, plus regular pest services when a plane is pulled out of service for other routine maintenance.

