

Poison Prevention Week 2021 Backgrounder

For National Poison Prevention Week, March 21-27, 2021, the Injury Prevention Centre, the Poison and Drug Information Service (PADIS), Alberta Health Services, and community partners from across Alberta are sharing messages encouraging Albertans to take action to prevent poisonings from disinfectants, hand sanitizers and household cleaners.

THEME: Poison Prevention...It's in Your Hands
Prevent poisoning from disinfectants, hand sanitizers, and household cleaners

Why focus on preventing poisoning from disinfectants, hand sanitizers, and household cleaners?

As Albertans take steps to protect their families and communities from COVID-19, they have increased their use of disinfectants, bleach, other household cleaners, and hand sanitizers. While these products are essential for cleaning and preventing the spread of the virus, when used incorrectly, they can cause unintentional poisoning and serious injuries.

When comparing the same two time periods in 2019 and 2020, the Poison and Drug Information Service (PADIS) reported:

- » A 73% increase in calls concerning exposures to disinfectants, hand sanitizers, and bleaches.
 - All age groups experienced an increase, but adolescents between 13 and 19 years of age experienced the largest percentage change of 157%
 - Seniors 60+ years of age had an 89% increase

- » Of calls due to disinfectants, hand sanitizers and bleaches, calls due to hand sanitizers increased 200%.
 - All age groups experienced an increase, but adolescents between 13 and 19 years of age experienced the largest percentage change of 867%
 - Seniors 60+ years of age had a 517% increase

Poison Prevention Week is an opportunity to provide Albertans with information to ensure that they are safely storing and handling these products to prevent poisonings.

Why participate in the campaign?

By participating in the campaign, you will be providing your community with valuable information on the safe storage and handling of disinfectants, cleaners and hand sanitizers. You will also be able to share where to get help in the event that someone has been poisoned. Campaign materials present an opportunity to talk to families, parents, grandparents, children, youth, colleagues, caregivers, and friends and to get them thinking about how they store and use these products.

Campaign Key Messages

- » Store all hand sanitizers, disinfectants and cleaners out of children's reach and sight. Use a cupboard lock or a location up high that cannot be accessed by children. Remember to return products to this location immediately after use.
- » Keep all hand sanitizers, disinfectants and cleaners in their original containers.
- » Always read and follow label instructions for use and safety information like using rubber gloves.
- » Avoid mixing different cleaners and disinfectants as this can cause burns or produce toxic gases.
- » Supervise children when they are using hand sanitizer.
- » Save the Poison and Drug Information Services (PADIS) emergency number in your phone contacts. If you are concerned that someone has been poisoned, call PADIS at 1-800-332-1414.

Campaign Materials

The campaign materials are free and available to download. They are not dated and can be used throughout the year. Download the resources from the Injury Prevention Centre's website at <https://injurypreventioncentre.ca/campaigns/poison-prevention>.