

Practical in everyday life –

Once in the hands of children, seemingly harmless products can cause serious poisoning accidents. Five sources of hazard at a glance.



Laundry detergent pods

They smell good, they feel soft and they're brightly coloured – we're talking about laundry detergent pods (liquid caps). For children, they look like sweets, and it is fun to squeeze the caps. But beware: the liquid detergent is only packed in a water-soluble film that can quickly burst. The highly concentrated detergent can easily leak and, even in small quantities, causes severe irritation of the mucous membranes, which can lead to nausea and vomiting.



Hand sanitiser

When applied to the skin, disinfectants kill bacteria or alter viruses so that they are no longer infectious. If swallowed or splashed in the eye, they can be harmful to health. Since the beginning of the pandemic, many poison centres have reported an increase in cases related to disinfectants. One problem, for example, is that dispensers are often located at face level of children or are hanging in small bottles on prams. This is how splashes can get into the eye. Often this only hurts for a short time. Sometimes, however, it can lead to temporary damage to the cornea.



Liquids for e-cigarettes

The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) is aware of 851 cases of poisoning and suspected poisoning in connection with e-cigarettes from 2015 to 2019. In 82 per cent of the cases, the affected persons – predominantly children – had drunk refill solutions (liquids) of the popular lifestyle product. Most of these contain nicotine, which can cause severe vomiting and other symptoms if swallowed – even in small quantities. Large amounts of nicotine can cause fatal poisoning. Special care should be taken with self-mixed liquids, as they are often stored in unlabelled containers without child-proof caps.



“Poisoning Accidents among Children” app from the BfR

To provide parents and caregivers with information and support in emergencies, the BfR has developed the app “Poisoning Accidents among Children”. In addition to valuable tips, it provides direct telephone contact to the seven German poison centres of the federal states. Important: while the app does provide information on first aid measures, it is no substitute for medical advice and treatment in the event of an emergency.

More information:
www.bfr.bund.de > Presse > BfR-Apps: Vergiftungsunfälle bei Kindern (in German)

hazardous for children



Toilet cleaners

To make sure that toilet cleaners reach the hard-to-access edges of toilets, their bottle necks are often curved. Their shape is reminiscent of ducks and, to children's eyes, looks like a toy. Yet appearances are deceptive: the cleaners can cause severe burns to the eyes and skin. Swallowing such corrosive products can cause lifelong symptoms and even be fatal. Although household products that are classified and labelled as being corrosive to the skin must have a child-resistant closure, accidents often happen.



Liquids for barbecues, garden torches and oil lamps

Summertime is barbecue time. But be careful: don't put down liquid barbecue lighters or oily fuels for torches or oil lamps carelessly. Small children may mistake them for drinks. If the paraffin-containing oils are swallowed, they can "crawl" into the lungs and cause coughing, shortness of breath or fever and lead to suffocation.



© ruslantiaradobestock



Avoiding poisoning

Keep household chemicals out of the reach of children, do not decant them into seemingly harmless containers such as beverage bottles and avoid corrosive and other products classified as hazardous as much as possible.

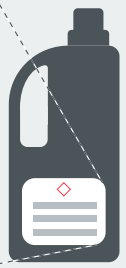
More information:
www.bfr.bund.de/en > A-Z Index: intoxication/poisoning

Reiniger  Achtung

Beispielfirma GmbH Tel: 123 4567890
 Musterstraße 123 Beispielfirma@online.de
 45678 Beispielstadt www.beispielfirma.com

Verursacht schwere Augenreizungen. Ist ärztlicher Rat erforderlich, Verpackung und Kennzeichnungsetikett bereithalten. Darf nicht in die Hände von Kindern gelangen. Vor Gebrauch Kennzeichnungsetikett lesen. Nach Gebrauch Hände gründlich waschen.
 BEI KONTAKT MIT DEN AUGEN: Einige Minuten lang behutsam mit Wasser spülen. Eventuell vorhandene Kontaktlinsen nach Möglichkeit entfernen. Weiter spülen. Bei anhaltender Augenreizung ärztliche Hilfe hinzuziehen.

UFI: A123-B456-X780-CH16

UFI code: the alphanumeric lifesaver

The first contact in an accident is with the emergency number 112 or poison centre. However, they are often unable to clearly identify the product concerned. This is why the "UFI" was created: UFI stands for 'Unique Formula Identifier'. The 16-digit code on the label comprising numbers and letters links the product with full information about its ingredients and properties which has been transmitted to the poison centres. In the event of an emergency, the advisors at the poison control centre can use the UFI to provide fast and specific information on the risk of poisoning and the best medical care. The BfR helped to initiate the code 11 years ago and has been involved in its development and technical implementation ever since.