

HAZARDS OF HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Many of us use toxic chemicals in our everyday lives, in our homes, in the workplace, in our vehicles. Sometimes we are aware of them, sometimes we are not, but they are everywhere. Many bathroom disinfectants, window cleaners, furniture polishes, drain cleaners, oven cleaners, car waxes, insect repellents, and dish and laundry detergents, (especially the pretty colorful pods that look like candy), can be hazardous to a person's health.

These products may contain harmful ingredients that can cause problems if a person breathes the fumes, touches them, puts them in their mouth or swallows them. While some of the effects of exposure may be minor, others can be serious. Common effects are skin irritation, eye irritation, severe burning, fluid buildup in the lungs, and heart irregularities.

No matter what your role is in providing supports to individuals with an intellectual disability it is important to know the potentially toxic cleaning products used or stored in the setting in which you work. And, it is important to know the symptoms of poisoning and what to do if someone is exposed to one of these chemicals.

SYMPTOMS OF CHEMICAL POISONING

- Redness around mouth or lips
- Vomiting
- Difficulty breathing
- Drowsiness
- Confusion
- Breath that smells like chemicals
- Drooling
- Difficulty swallowing



IF YOU SUSPECT SOMEONE HAS BEEN EXPOSED TO A TOXIC CHEMICAL

Call 911 immediately

AND

Call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222)

When you call the Poison Control Center be prepared to give them the following information:

- Persons age and weight
- Medications the person is taking
- Describe the label
- The contents of the cleaning product.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The most important thing you can do to prevent accidental poisoning from household cleaning products is to prevent exposure in the first place. But, that doesn't necessarily mean keeping these products out of the hands of the individuals you serve. Instead:

- Teach the people you support how to safely use products that are potentially toxic.
- When possible, use non-toxic products in your service setting.
- Teach the people you serve how to identify and shop for non-toxic products.