

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What are they?

Household items can be hazards



Common household items can be psychoactive, meaning they affect the mind and can change mood or perception. Accidental ingestion may occur when these items are used outside the guidelines for intended use, whether from dares, popular internet challenges, or mistaking a product for something else.

Many of these household items have a variety of chemicals that can be toxic. It is important to know the risks of inhaling, ingesting, or even getting these chemicals on the skin.

Examples of Household Items

Laundry detergent pods (Tide Pods) 

Cough syrups, anti-nausea or allergy medications 

Aerosols (hairspray, whipped cream, air fresheners) 

Mouthwash and hand sanitizer 

Cooking spices (e.g. nutmeg, cinnamon, and saffron) 

Craft supplies (glue, paint, markers, and white-out) 

Gasoline 

Helium balloons 

How are they used?

Household items can be sniffed, ingested orally, or inhaled.



What are the effects?



In general, all household items have the potential to cause stomach upset, organ damage, and even death, when misused.



Ingesting household cleaners can cause severe stomach upset, difficulty breathing, and seizures- even if it is quickly spit out.



Some medications cause euphoria, but they can also cause unconsciousness and breathing difficulties. Click here for information on cough syrup: decyde.ca/substance-snapshots/#hallucinogens



Aerosols, markers, white-out, glue, gas, helium balloons and paint are often inhaled for a 'high'. For information on inhalants, visit: decyde.ca/substance-snapshots/#other



Mouthwash and hand sanitizer often contain alcohol, which can lead to intoxication. For information on alcohol, visit: decyde.ca/substance-snapshots/#depressants



Spices like nutmeg and cinnamon can cause hallucinations, psychosis, a rapid heart rate, and choking in large amounts.

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When do you seek emergency help?



Overdose or poisoning: Taking too much of a substance, or combining substances together.

Signs: Unconsciousness, difficulty walking, speaking, or seeing, gasping for air or not breathing, and vomiting or diarrhea that is not stopping.

Get help right away! Call **911** or Health Canada's poison control at **1-844-764-7669**, and **check the product label** for first aid directions.

Did you know?

Accidental poisonings is the **3rd leading cause** of unintentional injuries requiring hospitalization for children aged 14 and under in Canada.

Around 4,000 Canadians die each year from poisonings.

How to stay safer?



Not using household items is the best way to stay safer and avoid harms.

If you still decide to use household items, consider these harm reduction strategies:

1

Know who to contact! Keep the national poison control line in your phone or nearby if you're using a household item.

2

Store safely! Keep household chemicals away from the reach of young children. Make sure items are stored in their original labelled containers.

3

Timing matters: Don't use household items before **work, school, or driving**. It affects concentration and reaction time.

4

Moderate use. Regular use can affect your health and relationships with others.

5

Don't mix! Household items can react with other substances, increasing the risk of serious side effects like organ damage and poisoning.

6

Don't use alone. Always have a buddy with you, and check in with friends to make sure they get home safely. Share your location with someone you trust.

Follow the label!

After taking a harmful chemical, many people try to vomit. This **doesn't always work** and may even cause **further injury!**

The label on household items usually has first aid directions, including whether or not to induce vomiting.

Always follow these directions and be sure to **bring the container with you** when you go for help.

For more information visit us at:

www.DECYDE.ca



These documents are intended to support educators in their delivery of drug education. They are not for direct student use unless deemed developmentally appropriate.

References
1. Government of Canada. (2022). Use household chemicals safely. Health Canada. Retrieved on September 10 2023 from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-safety/household-chemical-safety.html#a4>.
2. Atlantic Canada Poisoning Centre. (n.d.) Top 10 Poison Prevention Tips. Retrieved on September 10 2023 from <https://atlanticcanadapoisoncentre.ca/prevention.html>.
3. Parachute. (2023). Poisoning. Retrieved on September 10 2023 from <https://parachute.ca/en/injury-topic/poisoning/>.