

TOXICOLOGY - II**COMMON HOUSEHOLD POISONING**

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Abstract: *Poisoning in children may be accidental, non-accidental, iatrogenic or in older children deliberate. Accidental poisoning occurs in four-fifths of the cases and is predominantly seen in children less than 6 years. Substances consumed could be medicines, household products and plants. A variety of household agents which constitute about 44.1% of poisonings, include products such as cleaning agents, cosmetics, insect repellents and agents used for home remedies. Most of them are consumed in small amounts and hence non-toxic. In mild cases, symptoms are predominantly gastrointestinal. In severe cases manifestations may be neurological, cardiovascular or respiratory. Most of them recover with good supportive care even though no specific antidotes are available. Prevention is achieved by limiting access of these agents to children, which would reduce childhood mortality and morbidity due to poisonings.*

Keywords: *Poisoning, Household materials, Accidental poisoning.*

Points to Remember

- *Poisoning due to household agents is common in children. They are mainly accidental in those less than 6 years of age and intentional in children above 12 years. Accidental ingestion is more common in boys.*
- *Fortunately most of the household agents are taken in small doses and hence do not cause toxicity. When exposed to larger doses they exhibit signs of poisoning and occasionally can be fatal.*
- *Mostly, the commercially available agents are heterogeneous and compositions are variable. The toxicity may be due to one or more substances. Most symptoms are nonspecific and may mimic other diseases. unless a history is forthcoming. Hence, there must be a strong index of suspicion in any unresponsive child as the diagnosis can be missed.*
- *For most agents, gastric lavage is avoided unless airway is protected. The mainstay of management is good supportive care, as no specific antidote is available.*
- *Implementation of good safety measures at home will bring down morbidity and mortality due to poisonings.*

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