



MICHIGAN POISON CENTER  
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

## WINTER & HOLIDAY POISON SAFETY GUIDELINES

### ENTERTAINING

#### ALCOHOL

- Adults should consume alcohol in moderation unless advised to refrain from alcohol use by a healthcare professional
- **NEVER** leave alcoholic beverages in sight or reach of children & vulnerable adults. If you have witnessed a child or vulnerable adult drinking alcohol, call your Michigan Poison Center **IMMEDIATELY** for expert advice
- If a child or vulnerable adult appears to be intoxicated, unable to wake, or difficulty breathing call **911 IMMEDIATELY**

#### FOOD

- Handle food safely to prevent food poisoning:
  - **Clean** hands and surfaces often
  - **Separate** raw meat from other foods
  - **Cook** to the right temperature
  - **Chill** - refrigerate foods promptly

#### IGLOO/BUBBLE DINING

- If you plan on eating outside in an igloo or similar structure:
  - The structure should be heated with a non-fuel-burning heater (no propane or gas heaters)
  - The structure can be heated with an electric heater or by various non-traditional ways such as heated seats, blankets, foot warmers (and some places are giving people warm potatoes)
  - The structure can be heated with a forced air gas heater placed outside the tent or structure with a diffuser that blows heat under the tent side. There should be CO detectors present.
  - The structure should be disinfected between guests and allowed to sit empty for 20 minutes
  - Place settings should not be placed until you sit down and preferably given to you wrapped in a napkin or in a bag. No shared menus or placemats

Visit [FDA.gov/food safety](https://www.fda.gov/food/safety) for more information

### DECORATIONS & TOYS

#### DECORATIONS

- Vintage bubble lights - liquid contents are poisonous
- Choking hazards - for infants and toddlers use a sizing device to determine risk
  - Christmas lights
  - Small bells
  - Small toys
  - Silica gel packs - found in packaging



#### BATTERIES

- Button batteries
  - Found in some toys, hearing aids, & other small devices
  - Choking hazard
  - High risk of injury due to burns if swallowed
  - Anyone who eats a button battery **MUST** be evaluated in a hospital emergency room **IMMEDIATELY**
  - Specialists at your Michigan Poison Center will follow up with parents or caregivers until button batteries are removed or eliminated
- Alkaline batteries
  - Found in toys & accessories for electronics
  - Choking hazard and obstruction risk if swallowed
  - Alkaline batteries contain corrosive liquid
  - If batteries are damaged & leaking, avoid contact with skin, eyes, & mouth



**Your Michigan Poison Center**  
**800-222-1222**  
**Free, confidential, expert advice**  
**24/7/365**

[www.mipoisonhelp.org](http://www.mipoisonhelp.org)



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### PLANTS

- Poinsettias may cause mild irritation to skin & stomach, but are **NOT** highly toxic
  - Poinsettias should not be accessible to cats or dogs
- Holly is dangerous if large amounts are eaten
  - Eating a few holly berries may upset the stomach & cause tiredness
- Mistletoe should **NEVER** be eaten and may lead to life-threatening symptoms.

*\*Allergic reactions are possible from contact with all plants regardless of the risk of poisoning.*

#### Seek medical care immediately for:

- Rash
- Generalized swelling
- Difficulty breathing

### HOUSEHOLD/INDOOR

#### CARBON MONOXIDE

- Change the batteries in your carbon monoxide detector & press test button to be sure it is working
- If you do not have a carbon monoxide detector, get one as soon as possible
- Have your furnace inspected yearly
- **NEVER** run a generator in your home or garage
- **DO NOT** leave cars running in closed or attached garages to warm up
- If your carbon monoxide detector alarm goes off, open windows in your home, evacuate the house, and call your local fire department for assistance immediately



#### THERMOMETERS

- Mercury thermometers should be replaced with digital or other alternate thermometers
- Seal mercury thermometers in a plastic container and contact the local department of public waste for disposal guidelines
- Call your Poison Center immediately if a mercury thermometer has broken in your home.
- Keep children and small animals out of the area where a mercury thermometer has broken until advised by your local health department



### OUTDOOR/GARAGE

#### ANTI-FREEZE & WINDSHIELD WASHER SOLVENT

- Anti-freeze & windshield washer solvent contain poisonous liquids
- These products may taste sweet & are appealing to children
- Keep containers out of reach of children & vulnerable adults
- Store all automotive products in a locked garage
- **ALWAYS** supervise children or vulnerable adults while in a garage

#### ROCK SALT & ICE-MELT

- **DO NOT** eat rock salt or ice-melting products
- Ice-melt products are irritating to the skin
  - Wash off & rinse well if in contact with skin
- If a child or vulnerable adult has eaten these products call your Poison Center **IMMEDIATELY** for advice

### GENERAL ADVICE

- **NEVER** attempt to make anyone vomit.
- **Call 911 IMMEDIATELY** if you suspect someone may intend to harm themselves, is having difficulty breathing or has signs of physical distress.
- If you have questions about poisoning or suspect a poisoning emergency call:

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