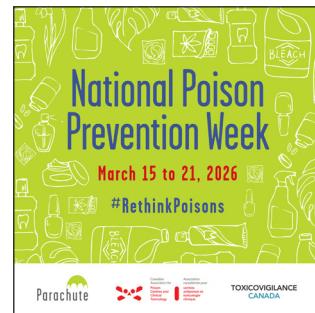


## Poison Prevention Week – March 15 to 21, 2026

[parachute.ca/ppw](https://parachute.ca/ppw)

Poison Prevention Week is an annual national awareness campaign to draw attention to the causes of poisoning and how to prevent them from occurring. With many potential poisons – such as medications, household cleaners and cannabis products – in and around the home, it's important to know how to safely store these items and what to do in the event of a poisoning.



### The facts on poisoning

Unintentional poisoning is the third-leading cause of injury death in Canada. Each year, unintentional poisonings cost the healthcare system and Canadian society \$2.6 billion. These tragedies also have immeasurable costs to the individuals, families and communities affected.

On average, more than 5,000 people die due to poisoning every year in Canada. Thousands more are seen in emergency departments and admitted to hospital.

#### Medications are the leading cause of poisoning in Canada.

This includes prescription medications, over-the-counter medications and natural health products. Each year, Canada's poison centres receive more than 200,000 calls, and pain medications are the No. 1 substance people call poison centres about. Poison centres in Canada receive about 100 calls a day about pain medications.



### Safe medication use saves lives.

In 2026, partners across the country are joining forces to encourage all people in Canada to #RethinkPoisons. It's easy to find over-the-counter medications and natural health products in stores, online and at home. They are safe for most people if you use them in the right ways. But, there are dangers if you don't use them safely.

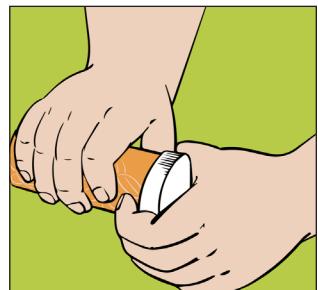
Knowing how to use and store prescription medications, over-the-counter medications and natural health products safely can prevent poison-related injuries and harm for you and your family.

Over-the-counter medication is medication you can buy without a prescription from a doctor. One example is medication that helps with pain, such as acetaminophen. Another example is cough syrup.

Natural health products are made with plants, minerals or other natural things. Vitamins and traditional medicines are examples.

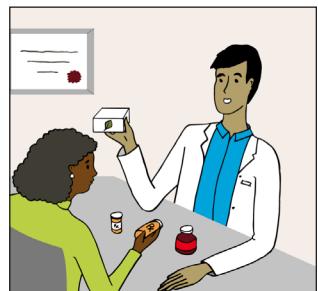
## Take action to prevent poisoning

- Always read the label and instructions for use before giving or taking medication. The label tells you how, when and who should take the medication. It also has important warnings and precautions.
- Read and follow the dosage. Medications do not work better by taking more than the recommended dose. They work best when you take the correct dose.
- Pay attention to all dosage instructions. Read how much medication you can take at once, how often to take it, and how much you can take in 24 hours.



## When picking up or buying medication

- Talk to your pharmacist. They can help you use prescriptions, over-the-counter medications and natural health products safely.
- Pay attention to packaging. Choose products with child-resistant packaging and buy smaller packages instead of bigger ones. Having less medication at home can help prevent misuse and abuse.



## Store medications safely away after every use

- Store over-the-counter medications and products safely away, just like prescriptions, after every use.
- Storing medications and products safely means locking them away, up high and out of reach. Medication lock bags or boxes can be used to securely store medications.
- Return expired and unused prescription and over-the-counter medications and natural health products to your pharmacy or through your local unwanted medications take-back program.



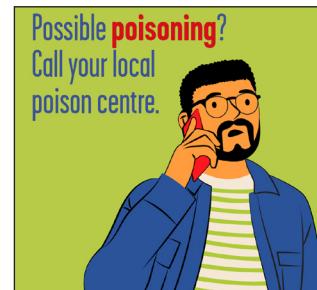
**If a possible poisoning occurs, contact your local poison centre. In case of loss of consciousness or difficulty breathing, call 9-1-1.**

For more information on #RethinkPoisons, visit:

**Parachute** – [parachute.ca/poisoning](https://parachute.ca/poisoning)

**Canadian Association for Poison Centres and Clinical Toxicology** – [infopoison.ca](https://infopoison.ca)

**Health Canada** – [canada.ca/en/health-canada.html](https://canada.ca/en/health-canada.html)



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