



Goals

- To teach young children to always ask an adult before touching, tasting, or smelling a potentially poisonous substance
- To teach adults how to prevent poisonings
- To teach adults to call the Poison Control Center immediately in case of a possible poisoning

Your Program At-A-Glance

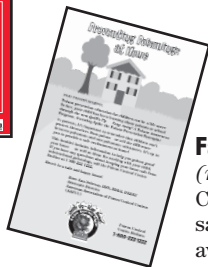
Video

Spike's Poison Prevention Adventure
An engaging 11-minute puppet show



Teacher's Guide

Includes poison prevention information and classroom activities



Family Take-home

(reproducible master)
Current need-to-know safety information for avoiding poisonings at home



Spike Paper Puppets

- For teachers: full color, laminated
- For students: black-and-white reproducible master



Poison Control Stickers

(in quantity of 24)
An important reminder featuring the Poison Control Center Hotline number

Educator Survey

A response card for sharing your comments and experiences



Sponsored by the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC)

Brought to you by your local Poison Center

24-hour Toll-free

Poison Control Center Hotline: 1-800-222-1222



Dear Teacher



You can play a vital role in educating your students about poison prevention. Young children are at greatest risk for unintentional poisonings – and that’s why we’ve created the *Quills Up – Stay Away! A Poison Awareness Program* — featuring Spike, the porcupine puppet. The program makes it easy and fun to teach this important topic.

Quills Up! includes a video and classroom activities as well as educational materials for parents/caregivers — because getting parents and other adults involved is critical to poison prevention. We’d like to hear how this program works for you, your students, and their parents, so please fill out and return the enclosed Educator Survey. When you return the card, you can tell us if you need more Poison Control stickers or other materials.

Thank you for joining us in helping to protect children and families from the threat of unintentional poisonings. Best of luck with the program.

Sincerely yours,

Rose Ann Soloway, BSN, MSEd, DABAT
Associate Director
American Association of
Poison Control Centers (AAPCC)

Poison Prevention

Poison prevention education can be a lifesaver – and through your classroom, you can teach important safety information. However, children can’t totally protect themselves from poisons or distinguish poisonous from non-poisonous substances. It’s up to adults – parents, teachers, and caregivers – to provide a safe environment! Here are the basics.

Household products are safe to use for the jobs for which they’re developed. However, some products can cause serious injury if they’re misused. Other products can make children and adults sick if misused. That’s why *all* products should be handled, used, and stored very carefully.

Likewise, medicines are safe to use as recommended — the right medicine, in the right dose, to the right person, in the right amount, and at the right time. Otherwise, medicines can be poisonous.

Poison Prevention Guidelines

- Always read labels before giving medicine or using household products.
- Don’t let children watch adults taking medicine.
- Call medicines – including vitamins – by their proper names. Do not refer to them as candy!
- Keep all medicines and household products out of the reach of young children.
- Use child-resistant packages – but remember that nothing is childproof!
- Identify the most dangerous poisons at home and lock them up in their original child-resistant packaging – out of sight and away from children (see below).
- Use cabinet locks and store potential poisons in high cabinets.
- Depending on your area of the country, poisonous plants, mushrooms, snakes, spiders, or scorpions might be potential dangers. Call your Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222** to learn about local hazards.



What to Do in an Emergency

Even in the safest home, poisonings can happen. Here’s an action plan if a poisoning occurs.

- If the **victim is unconscious**, not breathing, or having seizures, call 911 or your local emergency ambulance number.
- **Poisons in the eye:** rinse with running water for 15 – 20 minutes, then call the Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.
- **Poisons on the skin:** rinse with running water for 15 – 20 minutes while removing contaminated clothing, then call the Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.
- **Inhaled poisons:** get to fresh air, then call the Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**.
- **Swallowed medicines:** call the Poison Center immediately at **1-800-222-1222**.
- **Swallowed substances** other than medicines: give a small amount of water or milk to drink, then call the Poison Center immediately at **1-800-222-1222**.

Your Poison Control Center Toll-Free Hotline

There's just one phone number you need to know for poison help or information — no matter where you are in the U.S.

1-800-222-1222

Post it prominently in your home, and make sure that caregivers, babysitters, and all family members know where to find the number in case of a poisoning.

This number will automatically connect you to an expert at the Poison Center in *your* area.

- The Poison Center helps people of all ages, not just children.
- The service is free and confidential.
- The Center can help callers who are hearing impaired or who speak languages other than English.
- The experts at your Poison Center can answer your poison-related questions — they'd rather prevent a poisoning than treat it!

Key Messages for Children

The *Quills Up!* Program is based on the important things children should know to prevent unintentional poisonings.

1. Stay away from areas at home that could contain poisonous items:
 - medicine cabinet
 - cleaning cabinet
 - kitchen and bathroom cabinets
 - garage
2. Never touch, taste, or smell something that could be poisonous, especially if you don't know what it is.
3. If you don't know what it is — stay away and ask a grown-up.
4. Tell a grown-up if you see something that could be dangerous.
5. If someone you know touches, tastes, or smells something that could be poisonous, tell a grown-up right away.
6. Help your parents and other adults put Poison Control stickers in easy-to-find places, like on the telephone.
7. Have an adult call the Poison Control Center immediately (**1-800-222-1222**) if you or someone else touches, tastes, or smells a poisonous item.



Teacher Tip

Watch for other “teachable moments” to further reinforce these concepts — such as when children have questions, or if you spot a potentially dangerous situation.



Spike's Poison Prevention Adventure

Overview

The video introduces the concept of poisonous products and/or things in our homes in a fun and entertaining way. Created as a Circle Time activity, it serves as the springboard for class discussion and activities.

Spike's Poison Prevention Adventure is a puppet show with a classroom of real children. Join Graham, the guitar-playing host, and his poison prevention pal, Spike the porcupine, as they tell a story and sing songs about poison prevention.

Suggested Materials

- Pictures of kitchen/bathroom cabinets, medicines, medicine cabinets, garages, bushes/berries.
- Video (Approx. 9 minutes)

Step-by-Step

1. Before showing the video, introduce children to the new concepts, words, and places in the video. Show pictures of kitchen/bathroom cabinets, medicines and medicine cabinets, garages, bushes/berries.
 - *Poison/Poisonous* – things that could hurt you if you touch them, taste them, or smell them. If I just look at a spider, it won't hurt me. If I touch it the spider can hurt/sting me — it can be *poisonous*. If I look at my mom's medicine, it won't hurt me. If I taste it, it could make me sick.
 - *Prevention* – making sure that something doesn't happen. If I leave my toys on the sidewalk, someone could trip over them and fall. If I put my toys away, I keep somebody from hurting themselves — I *prevent* a fall.
 - Places in the home where poisonous items might be found: kitchen/bathroom cabinets, medicine cabinet, garage, yard.
2. Tell the children that they're going to meet a new video friend who will tell you about his Poison Prevention Adventure — let's listen to his story!
3. View the video with the children.
4. *Option:* Present the *Sing Along with Spike* activity (page 6) after the video, or do it the next day.



Sing Along with Spike

Overview

Children learn the song from the video, reinforcing the key messages: stay away from things that might be poisonous, and tell a grown-up if you aren't sure what something is.

Suggested Materials

- *Stay Away* song from page 7.
- Teacher's full-color laminated puppet
Option: Glue a tongue depressor to one side of the puppet.
- Photocopies of the children's reproducible Spike puppets — 1 per child
- Tongue depressors — 1 per child
- Glue sticks or non-toxic glue, e.g., white glue

Step-by-Step

1. Have children make their puppets.

- Fold the puppet reproducible in half, with Quills Up on one side and Quills Down on the other.
- On the inside, glue a tongue depressor to one side.
- Glue the two sides together, keeping the tongue depressor between them.

2. Sing the Song

Have the children sing the song from the video, using the hand motions and/or puppets to act out the song.



Spike's "Stay Away" Song

(Sung to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It")



Verse I

If you don't know what it is,
Stay away! (*clap clap*)
If you don't know what it is,
Stay away! (*clap clap*)
If you don't know what it is,
find a grown-up right away.
If you don't know what it is,
Stay away! (*clap clap*)

Motions

Shake head; throw hands back in "hands off" motion; two claps



Calling motion with cupped hands



Verse II

If you think it might be poison,
Stay away! (*clap clap*)
If you think it might be poison,
Stay away! (*clap clap*)
If you think it might be poison,
find a grown-up right away.
If you think it might be poison,
Stay away! (*clap clap*)

Point to own head; repeat "hands off" motion; two claps



Calling motion with cupped hands



*Optional Verse

If [another child] has touched it,
Call for help. (*clap clap*)
If [another child] has touched it,
Call for help. (*clap clap*)
If [another child] has touched it,
find a grown-up right away.
If [another child] has touched it,
Call for help. (*clap clap*)

Point to a classmate; repeat "hands off" motion; two claps



Calling motion with cupped hands



*** Insert children's suggestions in place of [another child], such as:**

- Little brother or sister
- Friend
- Neighbor
- Classmate
- Cousin



What's Safe, What's Not?

Note: this activity can be presented in one or two Circle Time sessions, depending on class schedules.

Overview

Part I

This Experience Chart activity is a review of the video – children use the Chart to show places where poisons might be found in their homes.

Part II

To expand the “What’s Safe, What’s Not” concept, the Chart is used to show the kinds of potentially harmful products that might be found in those places.

Suggested Materials

- Experience Chart, i.e., flip chart and paper, magnetic board, felt board, clothesline, etc.
- Markers, magnets, felt pieces, clothes pins, cellophane tape, or other appropriate item to write on or attach pictures to the Chart.
- 1 photocopy of childrens’ Spike puppet.
- Pictures of:
 - Places that may contain poisonous items (medicine cabinet, kitchen/bathroom cabinets, garage, yard, mom’s purse)
 - Items to be avoided (pesticides, gasoline, drain cleaners, plants/berries, mom’s purse, cleaning products, nail care products, medicines)
 - Places and products that are safe (stuffed animals, books, toys, blankets, bedroom, refrigerator, spoon, etc.)
- Draw or place a line down the center of the Experience Chart to clearly make two columns: Quills Up and Quills Down. Attach the appropriate Spike puppet picture to the top of each column.



Teacher Tip

Picture Options:

- *Cut pictures from magazines/newspapers.*
- *Draw generic pictures of bottles/cans.*
- *Take photographs of a garage area, kitchen and bathroom cabinets, open medicine cabinet, yard bushes with berries, etc.*
- *Include local hazards, such as plants, mushrooms, etc., according to your Poison Center.*

Step-by-Step

Part I — Places to Avoid

1. Ask: “What happens to Spike’s quills when he’s around something dangerous?” “What happens when Spike is around something that’s safe?”
2. Ask children to name places in their homes that may contain poisonous items. “What were some of the places Spike and Graham talked about in the video?” (kitchen cabinet, garage, yard, medicine cabinet, and mom’s purse).
3. As places are mentioned, have children attach appropriate pictures to the Quills Up column.

Part II — Things to Avoid

4. Discuss: “We’ve talked about places where dangerous items might be stored. What kinds of dangerous things might be stored there?” “What did Spike talk about?” (cans and bottles, mom’s purse, branch of berries, anything that you don’t recognize). “What are some other things that might be poisonous?” Let children respond. As products/items are mentioned, have children attach appropriate pictures to the Quills Up column.
5. “We have quite a few Quills Up things on our Chart, what are some things that might go on the Quills Down side?” As items are mentioned, have children attach pictures to the Quills Down column.
6. Review the Chart by asking:
 - “What should you never do if you see something that could harm you?” (Never touch it, taste it, or smell it). “What should you do if you see something that could harm you?” (Tell a grown-up right away.)
 - “What should you do if someone else — like your brother, sister, or friend — touches, tastes, or smells something that might be poison?” (Tell a grown-up right away.)
7. Post the Experience Chart in the classroom, and review it periodically. Let children add other pictures as they think of them.



Can Good Things Be Bad for You?

Overview

The concept of medicines is confusing – if they make us feel better, how can they be poisonous? This activity will help children understand that if misused, even good things can be poisonous.

Suggested Materials

- Pictures of medicines: children’s vitamins, cough medicine, pain relievers, and prescription drugs
- Option: Include empty or “pretend” bottles. Never bring medicines into the classroom!
- To illustrate pills, use small and large balls: 4 – 6 small balls (golf ball size, at least 2 different colors), 1 large ball (tennis ball size)

Step-by-Step

1. At Circle Time, hold up pictures and/or empty medicine and vitamin bottles — ask what each one is. “Does anyone take vitamins or medicines? Are they good for you? Why?”
2. “Can medicine ever be bad for you?” Give children **clues**, pretending that the balls are medicine.
 - The doctor tells your mother to give you one pill a day (show small ball). What if you take three, or four, or more pills (show small balls)? *(The doctor gives you just the right amount of medicine to take. If you take that amount it will make you well. If you take too much, it can make you sick.)*
 - What if you take an adult’s medicine by mistake (large ball) instead of your medicine (small ball)? *(The doctor gives you just the right amount for your size. An adult’s medicine might be too strong for you.)*
 - What if you take your (sibling, friend, etc.) medicine (small colored ball) instead of your medicine (small ball different color)? *(The doctor gives you the just the right kind of medicine to make you well. Another person’s medicine that’s not made for you could make you sick.)*
3. “Do you remember what Spike said about taking medicine or vitamins?” *(Always have an adult help you take any kind of medicine.)*

Parent Alert!

- Nearly half of all poison exposures are due to medicines.
- Iron in adult-strength iron supplements and vitamins is the leading cause of poisoning death in children.
- Even non-prescription medicines, such as cough and cold medicines and pain relievers, can cause poisoning if used in the wrong way, by the wrong person, or in the wrong amount.



Quills Up or Quills Down?

Overview

In this activity, children will choose the appropriate side of their Spike puppets to respond to items the teacher shows. This is a fun review as well as an evaluation activity.

Suggested Materials

- A large bag or box containing *pictures* or *photos* of:
 - **Potentially poisonous items***: pesticides, gasoline, medicines, etc.
 - **Non-poisonous items** (can be actual items): a child’s blanket, sponge, washcloth, toys, milk, fruit, vegetable, spoon, fun things that children use and see every day.
- Keep the bag or box closed until class time.
- Children’s Spike puppets (see “Sing Along with Spike,” page 6) – 1 for each child
- Poison Control Center Toll-free Hotline stickers – 1 for each child
- Photocopies of Family Take-homes – 1 for each child

* Never bring potentially poisonous items into the classroom.

Step-by-Step

1. At Circle Time, tell children that you have some items in your bag/box and you need help to figure out whether they’re dangerous or safe. Will everyone help?
2. One at a time, pull pictures or items from the bag/box and show them to the class. Have the children use their puppets to demonstrate Quills Up or Quills Down.
3. Now that the children are “poison safety experts,” ask them to share what they’ve learned with their parents, families, and friends.
 - Show the Poison Control Center Hotline stickers and ask them what the number is for.
 - Have children use the stickers and Family Take-homes to teach their families about poison prevention. They can help their parents/caregivers put the stickers in a very visible place, like on the telephone.
 - Review the Family Take-homes and stickers with parents as they pick up their children.



Parent Involvement

Overview

Present a poison prevention program for Parent's Night.

Suggested Materials

- Poison Control Center Hotline stickers — 1 for each family
- Photocopies of Family Take-home — 1 for each family
- Samples of cabinet safety locks. (Local hardware stores or children's stores may be willing to donate these.)
- Video (optional)

Step-by-Step

1. At Parent's Night, explain that you're teaching poison prevention to the children, and that parents are the most important part of preventing poisonings at home.
2. *Option:* show the video.
3. Distribute the Family Take-home and review actions the parents/caregivers can take to prevent poisonings. Be sure to highlight safety locks in the discussion. Show some examples and answer questions.
4. Give each parent a Poison Control Center Hotline sticker to take home and put in a prominent place (such as on the phone). Suggest that they have their child help them place it!
5. Explain that parents should call the Poison Center immediately in case of a possible poisoning: **1-800-222-1222**.

Resources

- For more information on poison prevention, visit www.1-800-222-1222.info and www.aapcc.org
- Need additional materials with the emergency phone number? Contact your Poison Center educator. Find the educator's name and number at www.aapcc.org. If you don't have web access, call your Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222** and ask to speak to the educator.
- The butterfly and porcupine puppets in the video were based on original puppets from Folkmanis, Inc., Emeryville, CA. The porcupine was slightly altered for the video production.
- To order puppets, or for more information, visit www.folkmanis.com. For quantity educational discounts, call (510) 658-7677.



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