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August 2nd, 2010
12:01 AM ET

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Study: Spray cleaners pose poisoning threat



Household cleaning products in spray bottles pose the biggest risk to children 5 and under, according to a study published Monday in the journal *Pediatrics*.

Spray bottles accounted for two in five cases of poisonings and other injuries from household cleaning products that resulted in emergency room visits from 1990 to 2006, the study found.

The study did not look at why spray bottles resulted in the most injuries, but author [Lara McKenzie](#) at [Nationwide Children's Hospital](#) in Columbus, Ohio, said they don't have the same child-safety packaging that other bottles and containers do.

"It's just an easy thing for a small child to trigger," McKenzie said.

Injuries from spray bottles remained constant during the 17 years studied, while overall injuries from household chemicals nationally dropped by almost half, according to the study. Poisoning was the most common diagnosis.

Children from 1 to 3 years accounted for almost three-quarters of the cases, and bleach was the product resulting in the most injuries, the study found.

McKenzie said the decline in injuries from household cleaning products appeared to stem from a combination of factors including increased parental awareness, development of poison control centers and a law requiring furniture polish and drain and oven cleaners be sold in child-resistant packaging.

"We're still seeing a lot of cases," McKenzie said.

A total of 11,964 children five and under went to emergency rooms after exposure to household cleaners in 2006, the most recent year of the study.

McKenzie said parents should adopt an "out of sight, out of reach" approach to household cleaning products, and spray bottles should be switched to the closed or off position between uses.

She also recommended keeping household cleaning products in their original containers and not transferring them to kitchen or drink containers. And she said parents should keep the poison control number by the phone.

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soundoff (63 Responses)

Melone

Two cleansing products that have been found to be very harmful to your health are "anti-mildew" and "air freshener" products.



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Dr. Sanjay Gupta

did u know - wherever the president travels, a trauma OR is kept open? this is i Updated: 3:04 pm UTC, August 2 2010

brain MRI. any guesses? how about patient's symptoms? #medicalmystery http Updated: 2:17 pm UTC, August 2 2010

@diananyad will swim from cuba to fla. she told me her plan. wow. http://twitpic Updated: 3:44 am UTC, August 1 2010

with my pal @jklivin. he is working hard making a movie: lincoln lawyer. 245a, l Updated: 10:02 am UTC, July 31 2010

leaving a hospital in california. sign, what sign? #badhabit http://twitpic.com/2a2 Updated: 5:16 pm UTC, July 30 2010

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Elizabeth Cohen

Further signs of a heat stroke http://twitpic.com/2bavis

Updated: 5:48 pm UTC, August 3 2010

The first signs of heat stroke http://twitpic.com/2bav4w

Updated: 5:47 pm UTC, August 3 2010

Who's most vulnerable to heat stroke? http://twitpic.com/2bauwk

Updated: 5:46 pm UTC, August 3 2010

Multiple tweets today: here's a blog about avoiding and treating heat exhaustio

Updated: 5:44 pm UTC, August 3 2010

The heat is brutal - even deadly. Do you know the first signs of heat stroke?

Updated: 1:39 pm UTC, August 3 2010

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Try cleaning with diluted vinegar or products listed as "non-toxic."

August 2, 2010 at 09:04 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

Stacy

I agree, go non-toxic, and do your family and the environment a big favor. And be sure the products are also cruelty free, no need to use stuff they pumped down a bunny's stomach! I use baking soda and vinegar, sometimes together to get the foam.

August 2, 2010 at 09:46 | [Report abuse](#) |

Bob

Stacy, I know..that is so sad! They spray chemicals in animals eyes, down their throats... UGH.. It is deplorable. That Febreze crap should be banned. The commercial is such a lie. Well, ALL commercials are lies. They use words like 'fresh' to brainwash people. There is nothing fresh about that stuff whatsoever. It is all poisonous chemicals that will absolutely kill you. Slowly. I cannot believe the stuff that is allowed on the market. Then people have the audacity to blame God for it. NO. We did this crap to ourselves and our planet.

August 2, 2010 at 14:31 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

What exactly is in Febreze that will kill someone-not a child, but an adult?

August 2, 2010 at 15:01 | [Report abuse](#) |

nomoregobldgk

nightmare scenario and it is no accident these toxins find their way into consumer products, you think those stiff neck chemists with advanced degrees don't know what they're doing? I read Maxie Tirmé—find a primer at toxic exposure 101 or airfreshener411...I think her story means she witnessed the world end because of their evil

August 3, 2010 at 05:03 | [Report abuse](#) |

nomoregobldgk

@Melony

even if your home is safe they market these industrial strength toxins for use in schools, nurseries, hospitals and nursing homes where the most susceptible segments of our population spend time indoors.

August 3, 2010 at 05:06 | [Report abuse](#) |

Notmyrealname

Nomore, which "toxins" are you referring to? Which are used in schools and nursing homes? I know that the schools in my area are regulated very strictly, and teachers can't even use so much as an air freshener or spray cleaner in their classrooms.

Why is it you can't supply specifics, instead of spouting off generalizations?

August 3, 2010 at 10:18 | [Report abuse](#) |

Yvette

These cleaners should be treated like hand guns and locked away because they are just as dangerous. I don't understand why the numbers are so high for emergency room visits. Most people with common sense know to keep these things far away from their children.

August 2, 2010 at 10:54 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

BUTCH123

common sense aint all that common.

August 2, 2010 at 10:59 | [Report abuse](#) |

bdfb

wow is that off base!

August 2, 2010 at 19:42 | [Report abuse](#) |

Russ in NJ

Making your own household cleaners is much cheaper, takes less than 20 minutes a week, is safe for the environment, non-toxic for children & pets, and cleans just as well as the expensive poisons you're buying at the store. If you have children and you're buying things like bleach you need to have your head examined.

August 2, 2010 at 11:30 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

Blah blah

MAKE YOUR OWN CLEANERS. Do not put money into these scumbags pockets. Its very simple. Get empty bottles and make various concoctions using such 100% safe items as: vinegar, lemon: tea tree oil, etc. These chemicals are deadly.

August 2, 2010 at 14:33 | [Report abuse](#) |

bdfb

You'd have to be completely uneducated to have kids or pets and nto use bleach! People forget that natural and organic also means deadly like mercury, arsenic, cyanide, estrogen, ebola, e coli, hook worm, uranium, petroleum, mineral oil, natural gas, radiation. water is the mostly deadly chemical on our planet- it kills far more people animals and plants than anything else. Common sense includes being educated and not willy nilly that natural or organic is safe.

August 2, 2010 at 19:41 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

@bdfb: yeah, one can only imagine how these morons manage to clean cutting boards and other utensils they use for raw meats. Maybe they're ignorant of the ways food-borne illnesses are spread. Bleach is one way to sterilize surfaces where food is prepared.

They probably aren't aware that the best way to clean bird feeders, especially those used for hummingbirds, is with bleach. Check it out if you don't believe it. Bleach kills molds that can be dangerous, and when used properly, is very effective in sterilizing nectar feeders. It is important to rinse the feeders thoroughly after using bleach. It's better to use bleach than to use detergents which can leave residue that's harmful to birds.

August 2, 2010 at 22:23 | [Report abuse](#) |

Truth Hurts

Beezwax, you are a stone cold idiot. I also think you are a child with ZERO ability to think on your own. You use bleach for bird feeders? You should be shot. People have been cleaning and sanitizing long before you were born NIMROD. Bleach is NOT natural. Drop dead.

August 3, 2010 at 13:21 | [Report abuse](#) |

Truth Hurts

Beezwax, you are a stone cold idiot. I also think you are a child with ZERO ability to think on your own. You are unbelievably naive.

August 3, 2010 at 13:22 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

Truth Hurts: are you making threats now? I'm sure the mods will enjoy seeing your post.

Bleach isn't "natural"? Hmm. And where do you think chlorine comes from?

Somebody's been skipping class.

August 3, 2010 at 15:20 | [Report abuse](#) |

Andrew



etheo4 on [Change your thinking to kick t...](#)

Archive

August 2010

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« Jul

Use less toxic or non toxic cleaners. They are safer, and cheaper. Just google "green cleaning tips" and save money, keep your kids safe, and help the environment !

August 2, 2010 at 12:52 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

Mike H

We have child proof cabinet locks where we have chemicals for cleaning stored. All three grandchildren WANTED to dig in our base cabinets – but were safely kept out. It's not a big expense. You can get them at many general retailers and hardware stores.

August 2, 2010 at 13:18 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

Aly

Sorry, but those "natural" cleaners just don't work as well; they are not nearly as good at cleaning and killing germs as the "chemical" cleaners. Even when you use 2 or 3 times as much of the natural stuff (green brands or vinegar or whatever), things do not get as clean as they do with a normal amount of the chemicals. Store them properly, use as small an amount as gives you the desired results and use them in a well-ventilated area.

August 2, 2010 at 13:25 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

ALY PAID BY A COMPANY

WRONG! They work wonderfully. Apparently you are paid by company to say this.

August 2, 2010 at 14:38 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

Sorry, but I agree with Aly, and I'm not "paid" by any company to write this. I think many of these cleaners are harmless if used appropriately by adults. Can you prove they aren't?

August 2, 2010 at 15:04 | [Report abuse](#) |

Rob

I agree with you for the most part, and the vinegar odor is offensive to me!

August 2, 2010 at 16:19 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

Well, I actually researched the chemical ingredients in Febreze and others and WOW, that stuff IS poisonous. I guess I was wrong.

August 2, 2010 at 18:27 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

Knock off the phony posts, whoever you are. I did not post this and the desperation of the asswipe who did is quite telling.

August 2, 2010 at 18:32 | [Report abuse](#) |

andista

Funny, if vinegar isn't an effective cleaning agent, then why was I instructed by my doctor to use straight white vinegar to sterilize my son's nebulizer when he was having breathing treatments?

August 3, 2010 at 04:27 | [Report abuse](#) |

jona

WHICH SPRAY CLEANERS? Without that information this article is a waste of time.

August 2, 2010 at 15:02 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

nonovyerbeezwax

I'd like to know that, too, as well as the specific ingredients that are poisonous in those products. The people who are screaming about all commercial cleaning products being 'deadly' are simply engaging in hyperbole and hysteria, neither of which are very convincing at all. Of course, all cleaning products should be kept away from children, but if an adult is using them appropriately and safely, I don't see the problem, and this article doesn't imply that there IS one.

August 2, 2010 at 15:14 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

I just want to go back and correct my comments so people do not misconstrue what I think. I was WRONG in saying they are safe. I have a tendency to just comment without researching because I get so fired up! LOL. Mom says I am just 'passionate'. To bad all that passion means nothing because I am still single and alone. Oh well...

August 2, 2010 at 18:29 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

Again, not my post. If you're that immature, you need to take off your diapers and grow a pair. Either answer the questions I posed, or admit you don't know what they are, ya little weenie.

August 2, 2010 at 18:33 | [Report abuse](#) |

Eeyore

Really? Nun, can you tell me what ingredients are poisonous, exactly?

August 2, 2010 at 18:37 | [Report abuse](#) |

nomoregobldgk

they are generally marketed in steel cans, can contain things like cellosolve and MEK...even if you control your home environment most people are no aware of their use in all public venues where people spend time indoors, including high doses in elevators...that orange scent is not from Florida you know. By the time you understand the toxic load in your system is past the limit it is too late...Maxie Time tells the sorry tale, more at toxic exposure 411 airfreshener101 blogspot

August 3, 2010 at 05:10 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

@nomore: if you can't cite a widely-accepted source of information, at least stop spamming your own website.

August 3, 2010 at 08:48 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

I don't see anything wrong with using bleach on everything. Why are all of you guys so stupid? I'm glad I have superior intelligence over all of you because I actually READ things. Yeah, I never went to college or even finished high school but its not my fault I got knocked up at 15. Doesnt mean I aint know stuff.

August 3, 2010 at 13:25 | [Report abuse](#) |

Sparticus

Just don't worry about it... live in filth... let your immune system take care of it.

August 2, 2010 at 15:03 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

nonovyerbeezwax

I have reported these posts to the moderators. I would appreciate answers to my questions from someone who's older than 12. What is in Febreze that makes it "poisonous" and "deadly"?

August 2, 2010 at 18:35 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

nomoregobldgk

probably the 'secret scent' if it is terpine based and if someone is allergic

August 3, 2010 at 05:13 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonovyerbeezwax

Don't see any such word as "terpine" anywhere. Do you mean "terpene"? If so, it occurs in nature anyway.

August 3, 2010 at 08:11 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonoverbeezwax

By the way, for your information, putz: My mother died 3 years ago.

August 2, 2010 at 18:38 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

Bob

Hey nonoverbeezwax, you really need to calm down. What is your problem? You cant use someone else's name. It really looks like you have some mental issues you might want to address. Poor dear.

August 2, 2010 at 19:05 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonoverbeezwax

And you're a troll. And have been reported to the moderators. Get a life, bonehead.

August 2, 2010 at 19:22 | [Report abuse](#) |

c

Wow Beezwax, you must be on your period. hahahaha

August 3, 2010 at 13:26 | [Report abuse](#) |

c

i would bet every one of those commercial cleaners use small amounts of hazardous waste. we are a country of recyclers.

most of commercial cleaning products are made by companies known for producing very hazardous chemicals and they pollute our air, water, and land.

no way will i buy their products and that includes lawn care company products too. why support pollution!

August 2, 2010 at 18:57 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

nonoverbeezwax

Can you list the ingredients you believe are considered "hazardous waste"?

August 2, 2010 at 19:30 | [Report abuse](#) |

bdfb

Name any chemical that isn't hazardous in some situation or in some amount. Even water and oxygen are killers. Can you not make logical and scientifically accurate claims tha might contribute to this area?

August 2, 2010 at 19:47 | [Report abuse](#) |

gardenbaglady

seriously? I never even walk down the chemical isle in the store. What can anyone be thinking putting products on your skin and furniture? Ever take a walk on a snowy night just to come up on someone using a dryer strip, blowing that smell all over the neighborhood? No clean clothes do not smell like that.

August 2, 2010 at 19:05 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

nonoverbeezwax

Where, exactly, is the "chemical isle" on a map, genius? First of all, it's "aisle", and second, everything is made up of chemicals. You're breathing a combination of chemicals. Water is made up of chemicals.

Go back and get your GED.

August 2, 2010 at 19:24 | [Report abuse](#) |

bdfb

Name one thing in a grocery store that does not include chemicals. do you not know what the word means?

August 2, 2010 at 19:44 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonoverbeezwax

@bdfb: Are you kidding? These idjits don't know sh't from Shinola.

August 2, 2010 at 19:48 | [Report abuse](#) |

bdfb

That is ridiculous. Did oyu not ever take even a 4th grade science course? Water is a chemical solvent. Name one item in a grocery store without chemicals. None. Look up the chemicals in (organic) oranges sometime. Did you know many fruit pits have arsenic? Your argument is invalid and non-scientific. By scarying people needlessly you cry wolf and hurt oyour own cause. Please get some schooling

August 2, 2010 at 19:49 | [Report abuse](#) |

bdfb

All grocery items are made up chemicals. Start with learnign the definition. Look at the lsite of chemicals in organic fruit-arsenic, for example. BTW: many hazardous chemicals are absorbed via the eyes and nose and mouth, not just skin. You have so much to learn. You are scaring yourself silly for no reason. Educate yourself. Natural and organic do not mean safe or good or chemical free. Natural things are the scariest things known to humankind!

August 2, 2010 at 19:52 | [Report abuse](#) |

Greta

You guys are incredibly stupid. Obviously she is talking about MAN MADE chemicals. Are you really this naive? Get bent.

August 3, 2010 at 13:28 | [Report abuse](#) |

nonoverbeezwax

Greta, dearie, pay closer attention in chemistry next fall. Chemicals are chemicals, man-made or not. Read something besides the Twilight books.

August 3, 2010 at 15:11 | [Report abuse](#) |

Bob

My apologies, nonoverbeezwax. I see you have a little stalker. Probably some middle school kid with too much time on his hands. I'll be happy to tell you what hazardous chemicals are in Febreze. Just stay tuned. I'm a wizard with research.

August 2, 2010 at 19:27 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

Bob

Oh, wait. I must withdraw my comment. Here's information from a pet website concerning Febreze:

First, you may ask, what is Febreze®? It's a fabric deodorizer that comes in a pump bottle. It's water-based, and uses a modified starch as its main ingredient. Starches in this class are approved by the FDA as food additives. It also contains 1% or less zinc chloride, which is a similar level to what's in eyedrops. There's also a preservative and some perfume.

I guess I just jumped the gun and didn't do my homework. Sorry.

August 2, 2010 at 19:34 | [Report abuse](#) |

Greta

Oh yeah so if the Almighty FDA says its safe, it must be.

August 3, 2010 at 13:29 | [Report abuse](#) |

andrea

Frightening trend! I admit , I use some pretty strong cleaners, and some home-made.

This certainly makes you think about what they are. This number is way too high.

August 2, 2010 at 21:29 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

c

One thing to keep in mind. companies can hide toxic ingredients in products, by claiming trade secrets and by the way, arsenic is a metal, not a chemical. arsenic is used in pesticides. so finding out the actual ingredients in some of these cleaners could be nearly impossible without access to a lab.

August 3, 2010 at 12:03 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

TuneIn

Sorry, not buying your claim. If you can't support what you say with facts, you're not credible.

August 3, 2010 at 12:14 | [Report abuse](#) |

TuneIn

Hey C: OOps. I did a little research and you are correct.

August 3, 2010 at 13:30 | [Report abuse](#) |

TuneIn

Nope, I was right the first time.

August 3, 2010 at 15:21 | [Report abuse](#) |

c

Tunein

exactly which claim are you zeroing in on ?
trade secrets??

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/8b770facf5ed6f185257359003fb69e/631cf22eb540c4db852576b2004eca471>

OpenDocument

okay so i did some digging around on the EPA policy and it looks like they are just now changing some of their rules on trade secrets.

anyway do you just trust your health to a company's safety claim?

most chemicals have not been studied very well for toxicity.

buyer beware.

August 3, 2010 at 16:09 | [Report abuse](#) | [Reply](#)

nonovyerbeezwax

I'd love to "beware", c, but you've given nothing concrete for me to "beware" of. You and others are claiming that cleaning solutions are dangerous to everyone, not just kids, but you can't seem to say exactly why. Can't you produce any statistics about the number of poisonings that occurred among adults using household cleaners appropriately and responsibly? If not, people have no grounds for stating that these cleaning products are "loaded guns", that "Febreze will kill you" and other such nonsense.

August 3, 2010 at 16:20 | [Report abuse](#) |

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