



Catholic Healthcare West

Ask the Expert
Arizona Republic

Cheryl Shafer

Q: How should I store my prescriptions and over-the-counter medications at my home?

A: Proper storage of prescription and over-the-counter medications is important when it comes to the safety and well-being of both you and your child. Some safety storage and handling tips include:

- Keep all of your medications out of reach of children and in a childproof cabinet.
- Store your medications at room temperature and not in a room that has changes in temperature, such as a bathroom.
- Leave your medications in their original containers, so they cannot be confused with another drug.
- Make sure to check expiration dates on your medications periodically and appropriately dispose any medication that is expired. Log on to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Web site at www.fda.gov for more information on proper drug disposal.
- Do not share prescription medications. Finish the recommended prescription and dispose of the container immediately.
- Place visitor's purses or backpacks up and away from a child's reach in case he or she has a medication stored in their bag.
- Never refer to medication as candy and avoid taking your medications in front of your child.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accidental poisoning is second only to motor vehicle crashes as a leading cause of unintentional injury death in the United States.

If you believe you or your child is suffering from poisoning, call the Poison Control Center at 1.800.222.1222 for assistance. They are available 24-hours a day, seven-days a week and provide instruction on what to do if you believe you or your child has been poisoned.

Poison Prevention Week is March 14 – March 20, 2010. For more information, please log on to www.poisonprevention.org.

Cheryl Shafer is the Director of Chandler Regional Medical Center's pharmacy. For a doctor referral, please call ResourceLink toll-free at 1.877.728.5414.