



# Chemicals, Poisons, Vermin & Plants



## Introduction

We are constantly striving to adhere to the latest standards of hygiene in order to provide the best possible environment for your children. Here are our current practices in relation to chemicals, poisons and vermin.

## Chemical Minimisation

Today's society is obsessed with cleanliness to the point where most households contain chemicals which would have only been found in a laboratory 50 years ago. In order to prevent children from being unnecessarily exposed to lots of chemicals we are working on chemical minimisation in the centre. It is important to clean in safe ways such as:

- Using soap and water to clean surfaces along with a clean cloth. Soap and water is often enough to kill bacteria/germs as they die off with the heat.
- Using micro-fibre cleaning cloths are a good cloth to use. The fibres are split in a way which allows them to trap dirt and dust and not spread it around again as the cloth is used.
- Using store-bought chemicals that are plant and mineral-based are a good solution if chemicals are a necessity. These aren't as toxic or dangerous to the human body or the environment as chemicals produced in a lab.

## Poison and Children

Children are keen explorers and are interested in things they have not seen before. If medicines or chemicals are left lying around, children could easily swallow something or get it on their skin. Steps need to be taken to prevent this. These include:

- Checking every room at the centre for substances that could be poisonous or harmful .
- Store chemicals in a locked cupboard high enough so children cannot reach it.
- Return chemicals to this cupboard as soon as they have been used
- Buy child-proof containers with child-proof lids. Make sure these are correctly fastened at all times.
- Store all medicines and chemicals in their correct containers with labels.
- Continually check and keep a record of used-by dates for medicines and chemicals and dispose of those which are out-of-date.
- While we all know it is sometimes hard to get children to take their medicine don't call medicine lollies or chocolate etc. This will make the children think that their medicine is like other lollies. If by accident the medicine cabinet is left open children could eat a lot of medicine thinking it was simply lollies.
- Ensure plants a child's play area are not poisonous.

## Statutory Legislation & Considerations

- ◆ Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010
- ◆ Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

## Sources

- Poison Hotline
- Poisons Information Centre

There is also a Poisons Information Centre run by Westmead Children's Hospital. Their hotline is 13 11 26.

### Poisonous or Harmful Plants

Some plants are poisonous to the human body naturally. However, there are also children's allergies and also things like sharp needles or thorns to think about. It is important to recognise these plants and remove them from your centre's grounds. Children of about 12 months are most likely to be at risk from dangerous plants as they are most likely to put things in their mouths. The following steps should be undertaken:

- Not to eat anything straight from a plant or bush.
- If a dangerous plant is identified it should be fenced off and removed as quickly as possible.

### Vermin

Australia has lots of vermin that can cause injuries. Here are some basic first aid tips for dealing with common species. In all instances, it is important to act quickly but to keep the child calm. You know your child best, call 000 if you think it's necessary.

1. Use the pressure immobilisation method. This method is designed to slow the movement of the venom in the body. Bandaging the affected area tightly (but not tight enough to cause breathing restrictions, numbness or any colour change) will slow the spread of venom into the bloodstream. Do not tourniquet the affected area.
2. People that can help in these situations include: Ambulance officers, the emergency department of your local hospital or your doctor.
3. If possible and safe, try to catch the species and take it with you to the doctors/hospital as this will help medical staff identify the correct treatment for your child.

While creating a totally vermin free environment is nearly impossible it is possible to cut down the appeal of an environment to vermin. Steps that can be taken include:

- Frequently cleaning under cupboards, fridges, ovens and any other furniture which isn't moved frequently.
- Clearing away shrubs and bushes
- Avoiding the use of insecticides in the garden as it may encourage vermin to come into the home to get away from them
- Install fly-screens on all doors and windows
- Not leaving equipment outside
- Pouring boiling water down any spider holes as this will kill anything inside.

Thank-you for your time and we hope we've given you some handy hints for your own house. If you have any suggestions or queries about this information please don't hesitate to contact the director.

