

Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Give Labels A Second Look

Many of the products we purchase have flashy, colorful labels. While they can be visually attractive, they have a lot more to offer than looks. Food labels contain a variety of dietary information and many people read these to help maintain a healthy lifestyle. But how many of us take the time to read the label of household cleaning products? Healthy lifestyles encompass more than just dietary intake. Take the time to reduce risks to your health by being aware of what you use and store in your home.



Labels use specific terms as warnings



DANGER - substances which are extremely flammable, corrosive or toxic.

WARNING, or **CAUTION** - substances that are moderately or slightly toxic.

- **Poison** : can cause injury or death if absorbed through the skin, ingested or inhaled.
- **Toxic** : can cause injury or death if swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin.
- **Irritant** : causes soreness or swelling of skin, eyes, mucous membranes, or respiratory system.
- **Flammable** : easily catches fire and tends to burn rapidly.
- **Flammable Liquid** : has a flash point below 140°F (100°F by US DOT standard).
- **Combustible Liquid** : has a flash point from 140°F to 200° F .
- **Corrosive** : a chemical or its vapors that can cause a material or living tissue to be destroyed.



Safe handling practices



- Read the directions on the product label and follow them. Twice as much doesn't mean twice the results.
- Wear personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer (gloves, goggles, mask etc.).
- Use products in well-ventilated areas to avoid inhaling fumes. Work outdoors if possible. When working indoors, open windows. Use a fan to circulate the air toward the outside. Take plenty of fresh-air breaks. If you feel dizzy, headachy or nauseous take a break and go outside.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke while using hazardous substances and products. Traces of hazardous chemicals can be carried from hand to mouth. Smoking can start a fire if the product is flammable.
- Avoid working with solvents and pesticides when wearing soft contact lenses. These types of lenses can absorb vapors and hold chemicals near your eyes.
- Handle all chemical products carefully and avoid spills and splashing. Close the lid as soon as you are done using the product. This will control vapors and reduce chances of spills. Secure lids tightly.
- Purchase only what you need for immediate use and then use it up. Store as little of these types of chemicals in your home or garage as possible.
- Do not mix products unless directions indicate that you can safely do so. This can cause explosive or poisonous chemical reactions. Even different brands of the same product may contain incompatible ingredients.

One of the most common chemical mixture errors is with basic household cleansers. Mixing a bleach product with an ammonia product can produce chlorine gas. Chlorine gas can be fatal.

If you ever have any type of adverse reaction to chemical exposure' seek medical treatment immediately.

Keep the Poison Control number on your Emergency Contact list next to the phone:

POISON CONTROL: 1-800 -222-1222

