Preventing Accidental Poisoning
The most common causes of serious childhood poisonings are medicines and cold remedies that contain paracetamol and aspirin. While safe and effective in the stated dose, an overdose of paracetamol can cause liver failure.

**An overdose can happen when...**

- children get hold of bottles of the sweet tasting liquids they like to drink like Calpol, Disprol, Parapaed, Night Nurse etc
- children find packets of pills laying around, for example on bedside tables, in handbags, or in shopping bags
- people forget how much has been given

**To avoid accidental poisoning...**

- write down what was given and when
- store cold remedies and painkillers as carefully as prescription medicines
- lock cold remedies and painkillers away in out of reach cupboards, not in handbags or by the bed
- put all medicines away - straightaway - after use
- always read the label and follow the instructions
- never pretend that medicines are sweets
Other causes of poisoning in children

- Once a baby can pick things up, they will put them in their mouth. A baby uses its mouth to feel new things.

- A baby will try eating anything, even something that tastes or smells unpleasant.

- Coins, batteries, painkillers, vitamin tablets, cleaning fluids and tablets, cigarettes, alcohol, perfume, aromatherapy oils and mouthwash can all be poisonous to children.

Which of these do you treat as poisonous?

Get on your hands and knees to spot dangers from a young child’s point of view.

Keep medicines in your hand when in use and locked away immediately afterwards.
If you suspect poisoning...

✓ tell your pharmacist, doctor or Emergency Department – or call NHS Direct on 0845 4647

✓ act immediately – even if there are no symptoms straight away

✓ take the bottle or packet to show the doctor or nurse

✓ don’t make the person sick

✓ don’t give them anything to drink – just wet their lips with cold water if they’re burning

✓ if the person is unconscious or there is burning to the mouth, dial 999 immediately

To download copies of this leaflet visit

www.avon.nhs.uk/phnet/Avonsafe/home.htm