



## LESSON PLAN: "YOU CAN BE A POISONING PREVENTION HERO!"

**Goal:** To prevent children from unintentional poisoning by teaching them safe behavior towards un-labelled, unknown products they may encounter.

**Grades:** Elementary - Educator should adapt language and length of lesson accordingly

### Learning Objectives:

*NOTE that this lesson is compatible with **Virginia Health Standards of Learning (SOL) 2.3 (e)**.*

1. Students will identify a poison as being something that can harm them if they eat, drink, or handle it.
2. Students will demonstrate safe behavior towards any products they encounter when the product's identity is unknown or questionable.
3. [Optional] Students will create a safer home environment by:
  - a. Completing a Poisoning Prevention Home Safety Checklist with their parent or caregiver.
  - b. Taking a magnet, sticker, or other item home which features the toll-free number to poison control.

### Materials:

- YouTube video "You Can Be a Poisoning Prevention Hero!" (Viewing time: 8.5 minutes).  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwCntmBa07s&t=58s>  
(created by our friends at the Blue Ridge Poison Center)
- Computer and projector to share the video (or comparable equipment).
- Copies of Parent Letter and Poisoning Prevention Hero Checklist (attached).
- Poison center stickers or magnets (one per student). Order these FREE materials here: [www.poison.vcu.edu](http://www.poison.vcu.edu). Please allow 3 weeks for delivery.
- Poisons and poison look-alike samples (see below for ideas, OR use photos).

## Methods:

1. Watch or assign the YouTube video “You can be a poisoning prevention hero!” The link is listed above.
2. Lead a classroom discussion with the following suggested words:

“Remember that many medicines and household products might look like something safe to eat or drink. But they could be poisonous. Look-alikes can be confusing. Always ask an adult before eating, drinking, or handling something if you aren’t sure it is safe.

I want you to try to determine which one of these items is the “safe” one that you can eat, drink, or handle, and which one could be poisonous.”

3. Gather several examples of poisons and poison look-alikes. See list below for suggestions. Place one poison sample and its look-alike sample side-by-side in front of class. Can students tell which one is the poison? Allow for many guesses. Repeat using other samples and look-alikes.

*Note: Students may get caught up in the fun of guessing correctly. Work to help them understand that the object of this exercise is to notice how difficult it is to determine what is safe. It is not as important to be able to guess correctly.*

4. Point out how hard it is to tell the difference between something safe and something that could be poison. After each item ask “Should you eat, drink, or handle this if you find it?” Students should answer any variation of the following:
  - a. “No, it might be poison/might make me sick.”
  - b. “Only if my Mom [Dad, babysitter, etc.] says it’s okay.”
5. Tell students: “YOU can be a poisoning prevention hero by taking this safety checklist home and asking a grown up to help you fill it out. Following the steps will help keep your family safe from poisoning.” Distribute the parent letters and checklists. (Alternative: send an email to parents and caregivers with these items attached).
6. Remind students, “The Virginia Poison Center can help when someone might have been poisoned. It’s a free call and they are always open, day or night. I’m going to give you something with the phone number on it, so your family will always have the number close by.” Distribute stickers, magnets, etc.

## Assessment:

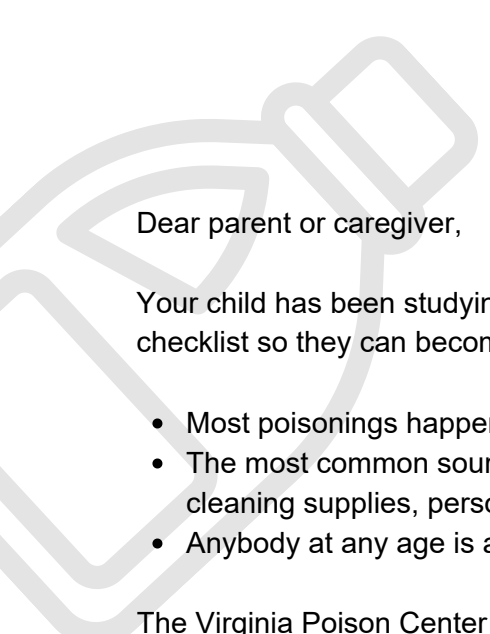
1. Students acknowledge that some household products and medicines could be *poison*, meaning it may be harmful if you swallow or handle them.
2. Students successfully demonstrate that unknown or questionable items should NOT be swallowed or handled.

3. Students will take home the magnet and/or sticker featuring the toll-free poison control number.
4. Optional: Students return the completed checklist.

**Look-alike Suggestions**

*NOTE: It may be more appropriate to use the Medicine or Candy poster available for free from the Virginia Poison Center instead of bringing medicine into class. Do not let students handle medicines or products. Do not leave medicines or products unsupervised at any time. You can order this poster when you order magnets and/or stickers.*

POISON	LOOK-ALIKE
Bleach or rubbing alcohol	Water
Amber-colored cleaning product	Apple juice
Blue mouthwash or glass cleaner	Blue sports drink or other blue beverage
Powdered cleanser	Parmesan cheese
Muscle cream	Toothpaste or tube icing
Red lamp oil	Cranberry juice or other red beverage
Gummy vitamins and other chewable medicines.	Gummy candy.
Pills	Hard candies such as Skittles, Tic Tacs, M&Ms, etc.
OTC laxative product in the shape of a chocolate bar.	Chocolate bar.




Dear parent or caregiver,

Your child has been studying poisoning prevention at school. Please help them fill out the checklist so they can become a Poisoning Prevention Hero! *Did you know:*

- Most poisonings happen in the home.
- The most common sources of poisoning are medicines and everyday household products like cleaning supplies, personal care products, pesticides, etc.
- Anybody at any age is at risk.

The Virginia Poison Center wants to help! Keep your entire family safe with these tips:

- ✓ **Store medicines** in a place known only to the adults in your home. Ideally this place will be up high, out of the sight and reach of children. Talk with your child about the dangers of taking medicine on their own.
- ✓ When giving or taking medicine, **know the correct dose**. More is not better.
- ✓ Leave medicines, cleaners, pesticides, and other household products in their **original packages**. Do not put them in dishes or containers used for food and drink. Many poisonings happen because someone swallowed a product that they thought was food or drink.
- ✓ **Be a good role model**. Before using cleaners, pesticides, or other products always read the label first and follow the safety instructions.
- ✓ Talk with your child about the importance of **asking for help** before handling household products.



If you suspect someone may have swallowed or handled something harmful; overdosed on any substance; or made a medicine mistake, call the Virginia Poison Center right away. Program this number into your phone:

**1-800-222-1222**

Specially trained nurses and doctors are standing by 24 hours a day, every single day. They will tell you exactly what to do. Free and confidential.

# POISONING PREVENTION HERO CHECKLIST

Ask a grown up to help you follow all these rules to keep your family safe from poisons. Check them all and become a **Poisoning Prevention HERO!**

- I will always ask a grown up first before I swallow or touch something that is not food.
- All poisons in my home are stored up high, where young children can't see or reach.
- I will only take medicine given to me by my parent or an adult who is taking care of me.
- My family knows they should read labels carefully, and never store poisons in dishes or containers used for food.
- My home has carbon monoxide alarms.
- My family has the PoisonHelp hotline saved into their phones, in case someone swallows, touches, or breathes a poison: **1-800-222-1222.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_