



Many people think poinsettias and Christmas cacti are poisonous. They aren't. But here are some real dangers to watch out for in winter:



Antifreeze

- Antifreeze is a poisonous liquid used in cars. It has a sweet taste. Children and animals like its taste.
- If even a little is swallowed, it can be harmful. It can cause kidney damage and death.
- Keep antifreeze, and all strong chemicals, in the containers they came in. Cap them tightly. Store them in a locked cabinet.
- Before throwing away an antifreeze container, rinse it with water. Replace the safety cap. Place the container in the trash.



Salt

- If eaten, salt used on driveways and sidewalks in winter can harm a pet or child.
- Store such salt with other poisons. Keep it out of reach and in a locked cabinet.



Mercury

- Avoid using glass mercury thermometers.
- A glass thermometer can break in a child's mouth.
- Use a digital thermometer to avoid the risk of breaking glass.
- Stay with children when taking their temperature
- Mercury is a hazardous waste. Spilled mercury should be cleaned up properly. Call Poison Help (1-800-222-1222) or your local health department for advice.



Carbon Monoxide (CO)

- CO is a leading cause of poison deaths. Every year, CO poisoning results in hundreds of deaths. It causes many thousands of illnesses.
- CO is a poisonous gas. It has no color, odor, or taste. All fuel-burning devices make CO. They do this mostly when they aren't working properly, or are not used in a ventilated space. CO can collect in closed areas.

Sources of CO include:

- gas furnaces
- gas water heaters
- gas stoves
- gas ovens
- kerosene space heaters
- wood and gas fireplaces
- wood-burning stoves
- power generators
- car engines

People at greatest risk for CO poisoning are:

- pregnant women
- infants
- young children
- older people
- people with diseases that affect breathing
- people with heart disease

Signs of CO poisoning are similar to signs common to flu and some cold-weather viruses:

- headaches
- nausea
- vomiting
- dizziness
- confusion

Seasonal Tips: Winter

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To prevent CO poisonings in your home:

- Have at least one CO alarm in your home. The best places for a CO alarm are near bedrooms and close to furnaces.
- Have your heating system, vents, and chimney checked every year by experts.
- Always follow product instructions for installing and repairing appliances that burn fuel.
- Never burn charcoal inside a house or garage.
- Never use a gas oven to heat a house or apartment.
- Never use unvented fuel-burning devices in a house or apartment.
- Never run a car in a closed garage.

When accidents happen with chemicals or medicine, call Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222. Get help right away from a nurse, pharmacist, or other poison expert. If someone has trouble breathing, call 911 or your local emergency ambulance number right away. www.PoisonHelp.HRSA.gov

