



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **The safety of young children – poisons and Paraffin (PROTECTION)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

Topic:

The Safety of Young Children –poisons and paraffin

Objectives:

- To alert parents/caregivers to paraffin and poison hazards in the home.
- To inform parents/caregivers some of the basic rules around paraffin and poison prevention and safety from the different causes of poisoning.
- To give them ideas on how they can teach their young children to be paraffin and poison safe.
- To inform parents/caregivers what to do in the event of a young child being poisoned.
- To inform them of national poison line numbers and encourage them to have these displayed or saved on mobile phones.

Introduction

Last week we discussed the very important topic of fire prevention and safety, our responsibilities as adults to protect our young children from fire and burns and to teach them to protect themselves, as well as some basic tips on how to deal with burns. Today we are going to look at some other hazards in our homes and communities and see what we can do to protect our young children from being injured or dying from these preventable causes.

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>Last week we learned so much about the common causes of fires and how to prevent these, so what exactly are poisons and what are the poison risks in our homes?</i></p>	<p>Yes, we know that babies, toddlers and young children are very vulnerable. They cannot look after themselves, so they depend on us adults to protect them and ensure they cannot come to any harm. About 80% of poisonings occur in young children aged 1 to 4.</p> <p>Young children spend more time at home than anywhere else, so we must make sure our homes are safe, but in fact, there are many poisonous substances in all our homes and more than 90% of poisoning happens at home. A poison is a substance that can make you very sick or even cause death if you are exposed to it.</p> <p>Common poisonous substances in the home include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cosmetics, hair products, nail care products and perfumes.• Glue.• Bleach, dishwasher detergent, drain and toilet bowl cleaners, furniture polish, and other cleaning products.• Paraffin or kerosene• Turpentine products, lighter fluid, paint thinners and solvents.• Garden products, especially products that kill insects, pests, or weeds.

<p>4. What should you do if you suspect your child has eaten or drunk something poisonous?</p>	<p>of reach and out of sight.</p> <p>AND NEVER put poisonous substances like paraffin into any other container like a cold drink bottle & leave them lying around.</p> <p>When you are not sure, assume the worst. Always believe another child or witness who reports that poison has been swallowed. Call a poison centre immediately or get your child to the doctor or clinic urgently. We will give out the telephone number of the poison centres in South Africa at the end of the programme, so make sure you have paper and a pen ready to take the numbers down.</p> <p>Most important NEVER MAKE YOUR CHILD VOMIT. Vomiting can cause further damage to your child.</p> <p>Be ready with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• your name and phone number• the name, age, weight and health status of the child• what the poison is. If you're going to the doctor or clinic, take the poison container with you. If you are phoning – read the label and the ingredients, including the company name and telephone number if it's on the packaging.• How the child was poisoned – eating, drinking, breathing in, on the skin or into the eyes.
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<p>7. What are the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?</p>	<p>fires, gas, oil or paraffin. This type of fuel burning produces carbon monoxide and carbon monoxide poisoning happens when you breathe in the fumes. You can't see, smell or taste carbon monoxide, but if you breathe in too much of it, it can kill you quickly.</p> <p>Fuels such as these are often used in winter when it's cold, and doors and windows are kept closed to keep in the warmth. This is really dangerous, especially for small children. If you are using this kind of fuel to cook or heat, you need to make sure there is lots of fresh air coming into your house.</p> <p>Early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are headaches, dizziness and nausea. As it builds up in the blood, symptoms get worse and may include confusion and drowsiness; fast breathing, fast heartbeat or chest pain; vision problems; seizures or fits.</p> <p>Very importantly, carbon monoxide poisoning can occur suddenly or it can build up over a long period of time. Breathing low levels of carbon monoxide over a long period can cause serious heart problems and brain damage. Many of our young children are damaged in this way.</p> <p>Other signs of toxic or poisonous fumes could be irritated eyes, nose, throat or lungs and coughing. Take your child straight out into fresh air. If symptoms continue, seek medical help.</p>
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8. *Why is it that paraffin is such a danger in South Africa?*

South African homes use over 700 million litres of paraffin or kerosene every year for cooking, lighting and heating. It is the most commonly used fuel source for low-income communities throughout the country and is used in more than half South African homes. The majority of household paraffin accidents involve children as they mistake paraffin for water and drink it, or are injured in paraffin related fires.

Some of the terrible paraffin statistics in South Africa are:

- 80 000 children drink paraffin every year
- 40 000 children get chemical pneumonia every year from drinking paraffin
- More than 200 000 people every year are injured or lose their property from paraffin related fires.

Paraffin is dangerous because:

- If it is swallowed, it burns the throat and stomach, and can get into the lungs and cause pneumonia.
- Paraffin related fires and burns are often caused when appliances are knocked over or explode.
- Indoor air pollution – paraffin fires reduce oxygen in the air and cause carbon monoxide and other poisonous fumes

9. *What can parents do to reduce the risk of paraffin related poisoning or accidents?*

Paraffin is often sold in bulk and then put into containers provided by consumers such as cold drink, milk or alcohol bottles. These bottles are often left lying around within reach of children, who mistake them for cold drinks. If your child does swallow paraffin, **NEVER MAKE THEM VOMIT** as this causes more damage. **Rush them to the doctor or clinic.**

- **ALL paraffin containers must be labelled and put out of reach and out of sight. If possible ensure that the paraffin container has a childproof safety cap on.**
- Substandard paraffin appliances often explode or cause flame flares which cause terrible burn injuries or death. Make sure you buy good quality paraffin appliances and keep them in good condition.
- Paraffin becomes unstable and liable to explode if it is mixed with other chemicals such as petrol. Buy your paraffin from a reliable supplier and make sure your container does not contain traces of other chemicals.
- Always put paraffin stoves or lamps on a flat surface, out of people's way, so that they won't fall or be knocked over and start a fire.
- Always make sure windows or doors are open when using a paraffin appliance,

<p>10. <i>What is the number for the poison information centre you promised us?</i></p>	<p>so that fresh air can get rid of poisonous fumes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you pour paraffin into a lamp or stove, use a funnel, not a cup. If you use a cup, your child may think it's water and drink it. • If your child swallows paraffin or is affected by fumes, get to a doctor or clinic immediately. Remember – never make them vomit and don't give them anything to eat or drink. • If you spill paraffin onto skin, wash it off immediately and change clothes so the paraffin doesn't burn your skin. • Always turn off lamps or stoves if you leave the house or when you go to bed. • If you have a paraffin fire, DO NOT put water on it – that will make it spread. Put sand onto the fire, or a wet blanket or use a fire extinguisher. <p>Do write the poison line numbers down and put them up in your house with the other emergency numbers from last week, as well as storing them on your cell phone</p>

Conclusion

This is a really important reminder to us of the dangers that exist in our homes and how careful we need to be to make our homes safe for children and family members. There is so much we can do to prevent poisoning, fires and burns and other injuries to our children if we think ahead and take precautions. It really doesn't take long or too much trouble. And what can be more important than protecting our beautiful children from accidents, injuries or God forbid, death. Most injuries to children occur when they are left unsupervised or in the care of an older child. Children should always be looked after by a responsible adult.

Be sure to listen again next week to our next topic in the important area of early childhood development.

Learning outcomes

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Understand causes of poisoning and potential poison hazards in the home.
- Understand the safety precautions to take to prevent poisoning.
- Gain some ideas on how to teach their young children to be poison safe.
- Know what to do in the event of a young child being poisoned.
- Know the dangers of paraffin and what to do to reduce its risks
- Know the national poison line numbers and understand why it is so important to have these displayed or saved on mobile phones.