

# Welsh National Poisons Unit

## National Poisons Information Service, Cardiff

### Poisons Quiz

Questions 1-5: choose the correct answers from the options

Questions 6-15: place the photo of the potential poison into the correct category (**Dangerous**, **Can be dangerous**, **Safer**)

Activity 1 – As a group, write down your ideas to create a mind map around the key terms

*Answers and explanations found at the end*



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Service commissioned by UKHSA.

**1. How many phone calls did the poisons unit get last year?**

**a) 8,000**

**c) 53,000**

**b) 2,700**

**d) 39,000**



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## 2. How does poisoning occur?

a) Inhaling

c) In the eyes

b) Swallowing

d) Through the skin

You can choose more than one..



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### 3. The most common phone call to the poisons unit?

a) Multivitamins

c) Cocaine

b) Paracetamol

d) Alcohol

Why is it common?



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**4. In 2022, how many young people (11-17 yrs) tried 'vaping'?**

**a) 3%**

**c) 75%**

**b) 16%**

**d) 35%**





## 5. What's the difference?



6.



7.





8.



9.



10.



11.



# 12.



13.





14.



15.





Dangerous

Can be dangerous

Safer

# What is a poison?



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Poisons around the house?



# Safety



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# Why do young people vape?



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# Illegal drugs – what's the risk?



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## Answers 1-5

1. (d) Over **39,000** phone calls to the poisons unit last year from all parts of the UK, from doctors, nurses, paramedics, to pharmacists treating poisoned patients.
2. (A, b, c a d) – Poisoning can occur **by swallowing** or **inhaling** something, or through the **skin** or **eyes**.
3. (b) **Paracetamol** (including Calpol) is the medicine we most commonly get called about. Because: **a)** It's cheap **b)** Easy to get hold of (over the counter). **c)** the treatment of paracetamol is complicated and includes an antidote! Paracetamol toxicity can cause severe liver damage following a large overdose.
4. **16%** (15.8% exactly). See <https://ash.org.uk/> for more information.
5. 140mg of **caffeine** in the 'Prime Energy' (Not for children under 16 years), versus no caffeine in the 'Prime hydration' (Safe for children under 16 years). Too much caffeine can cause symptoms, especially in children, including fast heart rate or high blood pressure, agitation and confusion, headache and stomach upset etc.



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## Answers 6-15

What's the picture?	Correct answer	Explanation
6. Button battery	Dangerous	If anyone, especially small children swallow a button battery, it can cause serious damage to the throat (oesophagus) if it gets lodged. Therefore, it is important to call 999 or go to hospital quickly. These batteries are found around the home, e.g. electric games consoles, electric car keys etc. For more information: <a href="https://capt.org.uk/button-batteries-understanding-the-risks/">https://capt.org.uk/button-batteries-understanding-the-risks/</a>
7. Carbon monoxide alarm	Dangerous	The alarm is not toxic, however carbon monoxide can be very dangerous if inhaled. Carbon monoxide is an odourless and colourless gas, it is released when items such as ovens, radiators and fireplaces are not working properly. Just like your smoke detector at home, it is important that your carbon monoxide alarm can warn you if levels become high to a harmful level. Carbon monoxide can affect your breathing, cause headache, feeling sick and dizzy or affect consciousness. If your alarm sounds, go outside for fresh air and call NHS 111 for support, if your breathing or conscious level is affected, call 999.
8. Shampoo, soap, shower gel and bubble bath	Safer	These items are considered to have a low risk, this is because they are low concentration detergents and unlikely to cause harm unless a large amount is swallowed. There is a risk of vomiting if a large amount is swallowed, call NHS 111 for support. It is also possible to get these products in your eyes, make sure they are washed out with water to prevent irritation.
9. Bleach	Can be dangerous	Swallowing bleach can cause irritation of the throat and stomach as well as cause vomiting. The toxicity of bleach and other cleaners depends on their concentration, a stronger concentration means it is more dangerous. If bleach or another cleaning product is swallowed, call NHS 111 or 999 if severe symptoms occur. It is also possible to get these chemicals in your eyes, make sure they are washed out with water to prevent irritation. If pain, burning or blurred vision develops call NHS 111, 999 or go to hospital.
10. Multivitamins	Can be dangerous	Multivitamins often look and taste like sweets and often look more like fruit gummies than a medicine. Despite this they do contain vitamins, which are safe to have as the instructions suggest but if too many are eaten, this can cause you to become unwell. Ingredients like iron or vitamin A may cause harm in large amounts. Always follow the instructions. Call NHS 111 for support or 999 if severe symptoms develop.
11. Air fresheners / essential oils	Dangerous	Air fresheners and reed diffusers among other household scented products often contain essential oils. These oils are highly concentrated and cause a burning sensation in the throat, vomiting and other more severe symptoms. Call NHS 111 or 999 if severe symptoms develop.
12. Medicines	Can be dangerous	Medicines prescribed from the doctor and medicines bought over the counter can be dangerous if too many are taken. It is important to follow the instructions and don't to take medicine which is meant for others. An adult will be able to give the correct amount to a child. Call NHS 111 for support or 999 if severe symptoms develop.
13. Toys (with liquid inside)	Safer	Usually toys are safe as manufacturers must follow safety guidance when making them. If you bite into them and possibly swallow some liquid, tell an adult, wash out your mouth and have a drink. If you feel unwell call NHS 111 or 999 for severe symptoms. Sometimes toys will fail to meet safety standards (unreliable shops, on-line shops), if this is suspected, let the Office for Product Safety and Standards know: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shop-smart-and-stay-safe">https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shop-smart-and-stay-safe</a>
14. Glitter and craft items	Safer	Similar to toys, glitter and craft items don't often cause harm. They may cause vomiting or an upset stomach if a large amount is swallowed.
15. Snake (Adder)	Dangerous	The adder is native in the UK, it's Latin name is <i>Vipera Berus</i> . Bites are rare in the winter when the snake hibernates. Most of the time bites occur on the hands and feet. Not all snake bites are poisonous, however an adder bite can cause severe poisoning. Swelling which can spread and worsen can occur, as well as other symptoms. There is an antidote treatment for adder bites, so it is important that anyone who is bitten goes to hospital.

# Instructions for activity 1

*Write down your ideas about the following, create a mind map on the sheet!*

(all ages/young children)

- **What is a poison?** *e.g. examples of poisons, dangers, anything you can think of.*
- **Poisons around the home?** *e.g. What poisons or dangers are around the home or in your garden?*
- **Safety?** *e.g. How can we stay safe from poisoning? (keep medicines high up and out of reach, not drinking from bottles without permission or without knowing what it is, don't mix different chemicals together, don't eat plants or mushrooms found in the garden or park etc).* <https://capt.org.uk/poisoning-prevention/> can give you ideas.

(Secondary school)

- **Why do young people vape?** *e.g. For what reason do you think young people decide to vape or try vaping? Why has it become so popular? Is there any dangers? Do you know what nicotine is? (There is often a high concentration of nicotine in vape liquids, making swallowing the liquid very dangerous, Inhaling the vapour is also potentially dangerous, especially in children. Too much nicotine can cause stomach upset, headache, confusion, dizziness, sweating as well as more severe symptoms affecting the heart).* Visit <https://ash.org.uk/> for more information.
- **Illegal drugs – what's the risk?** *e.g. Write down any risks for illegal drugs or anything you know about these drugs and their effects (Types of drugs, dangers, why do you think occasionally people become unwell after taking them, any ideas to promote safety in the future?).* Visit <https://wearetheloop.org/s/drug-related-emergencies.pdf> or <https://www.wedinos.org/harm-reduction-advice> for some ideas.



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