



Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention

Serving Massachusetts and Rhode Island

Ipecac Syrup Alert

The American Academy of Pediatrics announced its new policy on Poison Treatment in the Home at its annual meeting in New Orleans in November 2003. The AAP **no longer recommends ipecac in the home** as a treatment intervention.

The AAP recommends:

- Syrup of ipecac should no longer be used as a poison treatment.
- Pediatricians and other health care professionals should advise parents to safely dispose of the ipecac currently in their homes.
- Current research does NOT support the routine administration of activated charcoal in the home.
- Poison prevention should continue in the home and any childcare setting.
- The first step for any suspected poisoning...call your local the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

➤ **Why is Ipecac Syrup no longer recommended?**

- The effectiveness of ipecac syrup had never been proven
- Ipecac does not completely remove poison from the stomach
- It creates a false sense of security and is often misused and given without the advice of a health care professional
- Ipecac can do more harm than good – creating adverse effects including persistent vomiting, lethargy, and diarrhea – which can interfere with diagnosis and treatment in the hospital

➤ **What should I do with the Ipecac Syrup I have in my home?**

- Dispose of it in a safe way, such as flushing it down the toilet or sink

➤ **Should I use activated charcoal instead?**

- DO NOT use activated charcoal in the home. Research does not support the routine administration of activated charcoal in the home, as efficacy and safety have not been demonstrated.

If you suspect a poisoning, don't wait to see what happens, and don't try to treat it yourself. Call the Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention at

1-800-222-1222

Supported in part by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Rhode Island Department of Health, Project #H4BMC00050 from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health and Human Services, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare of Massachusetts and member hospitals.