



A new report finds small children who end up in the emergency room after being accidentally poisoned from medication are more likely to find the pills in a mother's purse or the floor than the family medicine cabinet.

Children also find pills in other easy-to-reach spots such as sofa cushions and countertops, *USA Today* reports. The report was released by the nonprofit group Safe Kids Worldwide.

Most accidental medication poisonings in children result from ingestion of medication belonging to a child's mother or grandparents, according to the report.

The group evaluated 2,315 emergency department records for children up to age 4. In 2011, approximately 67,000 young children ended up in the emergency room after being accidentally exposed to medication. Accidental poisonings in young children rose 30 percent in a decade, they found.

Of the records that stated the source of the medication, 27 percent were on the floor or had been otherwise misplaced, while 20 percent came from a purse, bag or wallet. An additional 20 percent were left on counters, tables, nightstands or dressers, 15 percent were found in a pill box or bag of pills, 6 percent were found in a drawer or cabinet, and 12 percent came from other places.

In 86 percent of cases, the medications belonged to adults. Mothers accounted for 31 percent, while grandparents accounted for 38 percent.

"You have some grandparents who have their whole pharmacy on the kitchen counter or the bathroom counter, and it is there for the taking," Salvador Baeza, a pharmacist who directs the West Texas Regional Poison Center in El Paso, told the newspaper.

Safe Kids advises parents and other caregivers to store medications out of sight and out of reach. SafeKids CEO Kate Carr recommends that parents ask grandparents and other relatives to secure medications when their children are visiting. "That can be an awkward conversation," Carr said. "But you can just say that 'I have a very curious child who is just at that age where they get into everything.'"

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