



# Poison HOTLINE

1-800-222-1222

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## Did you know .....

The common garden yew contains taxine-derived alkaloids similar to that which is found in the chemotherapy agent paclitaxel. These toxic alkaloids are contained in the plants bark, leaves, and hard seed. The only part of the plant that is considered non-toxic is the fleshy red aril around the hard seed.

Clinical symptoms of yew poisoning include dizziness, nausea, vomiting, diffuse abdominal pain, bradycardia, dysrhythmias, convulsions, respiratory paralysis, and death.

Besides children accidentally eating these berries, animal exposures also occur due to wreaths being hung on sides of barns or discarded where an animal can ingest it.

## Holiday Hazards

Holiday time is here. Children are visiting relatives whose homes may not be child proofed and their parents may be preoccupied by visiting and cooking in the kitchen. Suitcases and purses that contain medications may be left unattended and the house may be filled with the aromas of air fresheners. Some examples of potential holiday hazards the IPCC receives calls on are listed below.

Christmas tree ornaments are mainly a choking hazard, but some types of angel hair can be made of spun glass which can cause significant irritation to the mouth and throat if ingested. Sharp objects such as small ornaments or ornament hangers may also cause problems if ingested.

Snow globes are glass or plastic domes filled with water. The snow is made from a non-toxic chalk-like or plastic substance. However, the fluid contained in the globe could become contaminated with harmful bacteria over time, and cause vomiting and diarrhea if ingested (though this is rare). These are obviously non-issues when the globe is intact, but they do not bounce well when dropped.

Holiday Plants: The *poinsettia* is a holiday plant that has a horrible reputation, but is in fact minimally toxic. A leaf or two might only cause some nausea and/or vomiting. *Mistletoe* berries and leaves can cause nausea and vomiting. Small ingestions of *Holly* can lead to nausea and vomiting or diarrhea.

Holiday Gifts: It's a good idea to avoid toys that contain small magnets or button batteries which can be swallowed. Ingestion of these items can cause potentially serious damage to the esophagus or intestines. Some items that contain small magnets include stress-reliever toys and faux body piercings; button batteries can be found in singing greeting cards, light up pins, jewelry or pens, and remote controllers.

Alcohol: It doesn't take much ethanol to make a child inebriated. Just one tablespoon of vodka or tequila will make a 25 pound toddler legally drunk.

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**Help**  
1-800-222-1222

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