

## How can chemicals be used safely?

### CHEMICAL LOOK-A-LIKES

**Objective:** Decrease the likelihood of negative effect from chemical exposure.

**Concept:** It is often difficult to differentiate between safe products and chemicals which could be dangerous if touched, inhaled, or consumed.

**Targeted Age:** School age and Adolescence

**Materials:**

- ▶ Household items that have similar appearance to chemicals or chemical containers
- ▶ Unbreakable and tightly closable containers
- ▶ Labels with names of items printed

We use chemicals in farming for varied reasons such as cleaning equipment or curing animal ailments. Others stop the growth of weeds, while others may make agricultural crops thrive. Many chemicals are difficult to identify by appearance even by experienced individuals. Many of the chemicals used are potentially dangerous even in small dosages. Do not expose curious children to the very items we are trying to prevent them from being around.

This activity follows a television game show format. Set up your demonstration like a “The Price Is Right” stage. “Contestants” will try to guess which items are safe and which can be dangerous. (The trick is that all of the items are safe.) Choose some of the safe household items listed below or others you may have on hand. Place each in a plastic, transparent container. Seal securely. Mark each with a number.

Give each participant a set of prepared numbered labels with the correct product name (example: orange Kool-Aid) and a similar look-alike chemical (example: gasoline). Have them place the corresponding label that they think is correct for the item. Several participants can have their turn. A competition can take place to see which “contestant” gets the most correct answers.

Don’t give away the answer until the very end of the discussion. Your point will be made that we all have difficulty in identifying substances.

After everyone has tried the test, identify each item with the correct (safe) product. Talk about the chemical that each product resembles. A container (without the contents) will help the children visualize the chemical. Pictures of the item are preferable for very powerful substances such as a pipeline cleaner. Remember, preventing exposure is the objective.

