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## PROPER CONTAINERS/EMERGENCY DECISION MAKING

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

**Concept:** Chemicals should be stored in their original containers. This will help to decrease the risk of accidental pesticide exposure. The labels on the original containers have vital information for emergency situations.

**Targeted Age:** Adolescence

Ask students to role-play the following scenario. If students are reluctant to participate, simply read the story and ask them to answer the questions.

Tom is four years old and “helping” his 15 year old brother, Ben, milk the cows one evening. Ben sets his half finished ice tea on the counter and tells Tom to play with his toy truck in the pump room while Ben finishes milking the last five cows so they can go in for supper. Ben has a little trouble with one of the cows that doesn’t want to cooperate. Tom wanders off and starts looking in the cupboard where the bottles of cleansers, bleach, and ammonia are kept. One of the bottles catches his eye. It is a green bottle and looks like a bottle of pop he drank last week at a birthday party. Tom decides he is thirsty so he pulls out the bottle and takes a drink. It tastes nasty so he puts down the bottle and goes to find Ben to see if he is finished with the cows so they can go to the house.

Ben finishes with the milking and lets the last obstinate cow “Molly” out to the pasture. As the two boys walk through the pump house heading for supper Ben notices the bottle of liquid out of the cupboard and on the shelf. He asks Tom if he got the bottle out. Tom looks at him sheepishly and answers “NO”. Ben doesn’t believe Tom. He begins to panic, knowing that if Tom got into some of the chemicals he could be in real trouble. Ben yells at Tom, “What did you do?” Tom proceeds to cry loudly.

**Stop the role-play. Lead a discussion asking the following questions:**

- ▶ What could have been in the bottle?  
*Ice tea, soda pop, household cleanser, dairy pipeline cleanser, ammonia. etc.*
- ▶ How could Ben have been more effective than yelling at Tom?  
*Calmly ask Tom which bottle he drank from.*
- ▶ What should Ben do now?  
*Lower his voice and ask Tom to point to the bottle he drank from. Ben should then read the label.*

(this activity is continued on the next page)

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## PROPER CONTAINERS/EMERGENCY DECISION MAKING (CONTINUED)

Begin the role-play again by asking them to act out what they will do next. Add the following information: One bottle in the cupboard is marked dairy pipeline cleaner. It is milky white in appearance. Another bottle in the cupboard looks like the same color as the liquid Tom drank, only darker in color. After Tom calmed down a little he said his stomach hurt but his throat was okay. He says it tasted "very bad," not at all like pop. The boys' mother is in the house preparing supper. It is about 50 yards away from the dairy barn. The boys' father has gone to town for a meeting. There is a phone in the barn.

### Complete the activity with the following questions:

- ▶ What additional information should Ben try to obtain before proceeding?  
*Read the label off the containers*
- ▶ Would it be wiser to take Tom to his mom or get mom to come to the barn?  
*Call the Poison Control Center and answer their questions*
- ▶ Should Tom leave Ben alone while goes to get help?  
*Stay with him so he can observe any symptoms*
- ▶ What could have been done differently to prevent this incident?  
*Always keep small children in sight. Have all chemicals in locked cabinets*

### Help the students work through the decision making process.

- ▶ Identify the problem (a child has consumed an unidentifiable substance)
- ▶ Identify alternatives that could solve the problem (identify the substance and ways to seek help)
- ▶ Identify the pros and cons of each solution (effects of each substance and consequences of obtaining help)
- ▶ Choose the most appropriate solution
- ▶ Accept the decision
- ▶ Evaluate the choice for future reference (find alternative child care, lock up chemicals)

