

Wild Mushroom Safety

Wild mushrooms are abundant in many areas of the country, especially after a rainy spell. Wild mushrooms pop up in our lawns and under around wood and many other damp places. Some of these mushrooms are dangerous to eat; a few can even kill you.



How can you tell the difference between an edible wild mushroom and a poisonous one? Unless you are very experienced in mushroom identification, you can't!! There are a lot of mushroom look-alikes. Poison Control help many people with mushroom poisoning. Almost all of them were sure they were picking a safe mushroom.

- ◆ It is NEVER safe to eat a wild mushrooms. It is important to watch children playing outdoors so they don't eat mushrooms; after all, to a child it just looks like dinner!

Symptoms of mushroom poisoning vary with the type of mushroom eaten. Many wild mushrooms will cause vomiting and diarrhea; that could lead to dehydration and an emergency room visit. Others can interact with alcohol to cause severe stomach upset, headache, and high blood pressure. Some can cause hallucinations and coma. A few cause no effects right away, but can damage the liver; a liver transplant may be necessary to survive.

Here are some safety tips for wild mushrooms:

- ◆ NEVER pick and eat wild mushrooms unless they've been identified by an expert!
- ◆ Look-alike mushrooms can fool you. Learning how to identify mushrooms in one part of the country or another country is not reliable for identifying mushrooms in another area.
- ◆ Cooking doesn't make a poisonous mushroom safe. In fact, you can be poisoned by breathing in the cooking fumes from some poisonous mushrooms.
- ◆ Even non-poisonous mushrooms can cause unpleasant reactions in people who are sensitive to them.

Symptoms from eating poisonous mushrooms can be delayed for many hours.

If you think that someone has eaten a wild mushroom, call Poison Control right away at

1-800-222-1222. Poison specialists will tell you exactly what to do. They will work with mycologists (mushroom identification experts) to find out what kind of mushroom it is. They will also work with the emergency room staff so you can get proper treatment.