



## **TOOTHPASTE**

### **THE POISON YOU PUT IN YOUR MOUTH**

Brought to you by Global Children's Fund @ [www.KeepYourChildSafe.org](http://www.KeepYourChildSafe.org)

GLOBAL CHILDREN'S FUND frequently get questions from parents wondering why this item is listed as a hazardous substance to children. Here's why...

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The active ingredient in nearly all toothpaste is some form of Sodium Fluoride, which is actually a toxic poison. It is contained in quantities of around 1% of the total paste, but it is still enough to cause serious problems if overdosed. This is the reason they tell you on the tube to contact poison control if more than what is used for brushing is ingested. It's also the reason why swallowing even the small amount used for brushing can give kids a tummy ache.

This poses an even greater threat, because the flavored pastes, complete with sparkles, which children are used to putting in their mouth, makes it a convenient "candy" for a bored child. Depending on the age and weight of a child, ingesting even as little as half of a tube could be fatal.

#### **Children under 3**

Consider toothpaste among one of the more dangerous things you keep in your house, and keep it in a locked cabinet at all times. If you have older children in the house, clearly explain the danger it poses to their younger siblings, so they can help keep it away as well.

#### **Children over 3**

Children over three are old enough to be told about the danger it can pose. Just explain that, although very good for our teeth, it isn't good for our stomachs. Let them know that swallowing any more than just what they use for brushing can harm you, and they should never eat it like candy.

#### **If accidentally Ingested**

Swallowing toothpaste rather than spitting it out causes nausea and diarrhea. If you believe a child has ingested more than what is used for brushing, call Poison Control immediately. They're new national number is 1-800-222-1222.