

Press Release

Window of risk: Hidden hazard of automotive products

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Safety organisations are today highlighting the hidden hazards of automotive products and the dangers they pose to both humans and animals.

The Child Accident Prevention Trust is joining the manufacturers of Bitrex, the world's leading bitterant, to draw attention to the dangers of swallowing substances that are found in most garages and sheds across the country.

In the UK, every year, many children who accidentally swallow chemicals in automotive products, require hospital admission. In addition countless deaths among animals, mainly dogs and cats result from swallowing products like antifreeze and windscreen wash.

Katrina Phillips Chief Executive of the Child Accident Prevention Trust said,
'With the first frosts of winter, most motorists buy windscreen wash to store in their garage or shed. Many products don't have child-resistant tops or contain bittering agents. They often come in bright colours and look, smell and taste attractive to young children. Careful storage is therefore vital. Keep them under lock and key or on a very high shelf. Look for products containing bittering agents to stop children swallowing them accidentally and, to protect cats and dogs, wipe up spills immediately.'

Many automotive products contain a solvent component, usually methanol, ethanol or ethylene glycol. These can cause kidney failure, respiratory arrest, comas and death.

Cameron Smith of Bitrex said,
'Windscreen wash is an important road safety product, so all motorists need to buy it at this time of the year. But the risks to children, dogs and cats that are associated with these types of products are considerable. This is about preventing injuries with serious consequences – where parents will blame themselves horribly if something goes wrong. We have been working with manufacturers and retailers to increase the number of automotive products available which contain Bitrex®, to greatly reduce the risk of accidental swallowing.'

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Notes for Editors:

Figures for admissions to hospital in the UK do not isolate automotive products. Figures which focus on the chemical components of windscreen wash such as ethanol indicate around 200 hospital admissions a year in England.

Top Tips.

- **Always keep your windscreen wash in a locked cabinet**
- **Look for a product with a child resistant closure**
- **Look for products displaying the Bitrex logo**
- **To protect animals clean up all spillages immediately**
- **Do not decant windscreen wash into soft drink /unmarked bottles**

Denatonium Benzoate was discovered in 1958 by Macfarlan Smith and registered under the Bitrex trademark in the United Kingdom, Canada and the USA later the same year. First used in denaturing alcohol - making it legally unfit for consumption - it is now added to a wide range of household cleaners, pesticides, and DIY and automotive products. Since being approved in the UK and US in the early 1960s, Bitrex has been officially recognised as the denaturant of choice in more than 40 countries.

UK sales began in 1960, and by 1963, customers included I.C.I, Rentokil and Avon Products. The first use of Bitrex simply as a taste aversive was in a cream to prevent tail-biting in pigs.

Bitrex® has been used in a variety of applications since. One of the main uses is as a human aversive. Due to its overwhelming bitter taste, it is ideal for helping prevent accidental poisonings. Many supermarkets in the UK and Europe use the Bitrex® logo on their products as a selling point to their customers.

If you suspect your child has ingested something they shouldn't have, please phone NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 (England & Wales) or 08454 242424 (Scotland)

Take the Bitrex taste test – try Bitrex out. Taste cautiously with tongue and see why it's possible to detect Bitrex in an Olympic size swimming pool at levels as low as 10ppm



Cloudline has moved - please note new address -

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Nominated Sept 2007