Lesson 9  Curious Carmen
Identifying and Avoiding Harmful Substances

Rationale
Children may be exposed to many ordinary household substances that can be dangerous, including alcohol and nicotine products. Awareness of the effects on the brain and body of inhaling, smelling, tasting, or consuming harmful substances increases the likelihood children will respond cautiously, rather than curiously, and avoid these substances.

Character Education
This lesson promotes these character traits:
Responsibility  Self-discipline  Integrity

Objectives
Following this lesson, the student will be able to:

• Identify harmful substances in and around the home including nicotine and alcohol
• Describe the harmful effects these substances can have on the brain and body
• Differentiate safe and unsafe ways for children to respond when encountering harmful household substances

Activities
1. All the Right Moves ...................................................... 10 minutes
2. Carmen’s Exploration ...................................................... 10 minutes
3. Safety First ........................................................................ 10 minutes

Daily Workouts
Day 2: Careful Carmen ...................................................... 10 minutes
Day 3: Curiosity ................................................................. 10 minutes
Day 4: Bathroom Check ..................................................... 10 minutes
Day 5: Leave and Tell .......................................................... 10 minutes

Before You Start
• Fold a piece of paper in half and place it in a book. This will be “Carmen’s Letter” that is used in Section 2: Carmen’s Exploration.
• Prepare the supplemental activities from the Looking for More? section. For more information about the Looking for More? section, see page 33 of this manual.
• Prepare the Daily Workout activities. For more information about the Daily Workouts see page 33 of this manual.
• Make a copy of Home Workout 9 for each student. Distribute at the end of the lesson.

Materials
To deliver this lesson, you will need:
• Student Workbook pages 16-18
• Home Workout 9, Teacher’s Manual page 211
1. All the Right Moves

In our last lesson, we talked about safety around medicine. What should you do if you don’t feel well? 🚫 Tell an adult; get rest; drink liquids; etc.

What should you do if you find something that looks like it could be medicine? 🚫 Tell an adult; don’t touch it or put it in your mouth; etc.

Today we are going to talk about items at home that kids and pets might be curious about. These items are dangerous to smell, taste, or drink.

I’m going to share a story about Carmen’s curiosity. Help me tell her story by acting out the things that happen to her.

When I say, “Her whiskers twitched,” put the back of your hands on your cheeks and wiggle your fingers as if they are whiskers. ✖ Demonstrate for the students.

When I say, “Her eyes burned,” pretend to rub your eyes. ✖ Demonstrate for the students.

When I say, “Her stomach felt sick,” hold your stomach as if you were feeling sick. ✖ Demonstrate for the students.

When I say, “Her head hurt,” place your hands on your head. Keep them there and when I say “And she felt dizzy,” hold and spin your head once. ✖ Demonstrate for the students.

Let’s practice...

Her whiskers twitched.
Her eyes burned.
Her stomach felt sick.
Her head hurt, and she felt dizzy.

Great job! You are ready to hear Carmen’s story.

One day, Carmen curled up to take a cat nap. Just as she was cozying up with her favorite blanket, her nose wiggled. Carmen thought, “I wonder what that strange smell could be.”
Carmen followed the smell right into her dad’s bedroom. The bedroom walls were a different color. There were newspapers covering the floor. There was a big can on the papers. She sniffed the air again.

Her whiskers twitched.
Her eyes burned.
Her stomach felt sick.
Her head hurt, and she felt dizzy.

There was a very strong smell. Carmen was curious.

Stop and think.

What was in the can? Paint. Yes, there was paint in the can.

Carmen left the bedroom.

The next day, Carmen went into the kitchen. The cupboard under the sink was open. Carmen peeked into the cupboard and saw a bottle with a cleaning rag next to it. She noticed the lid wasn’t on the bottle. She sniffed the air.

Her whiskers twitched.
Her eyes burned.
Her stomach felt sick.
Her head hurt, and she felt dizzy.

There was a very strong smell. Carmen was curious.

Stop and think.

What do you think was in the bottle? Household cleaner, cleaning supplies, etc.

Carmen left and told an adult about the open kitchen cupboard and the bottle.

On another day, Carmen went out to the garage. When she walked past the lawnmower, she noticed a big, red plastic jug that didn’t have a lid on it. Carmen wasn’t sure what was in the jug. She leaned in and sniffed the air.
Her whiskers twitched.
Her eyes burned.
Her stomach felt sick.
Her head hurt, and she felt dizzy.

There was a very strong smell. Carmen was curious.

Stop and think.

What do you think was in the big, red plastic jug? Gasoline.

Carmen left the garage and told an adult about the open jug.

Strong chemicals can be dangerous if we smell or touch them. They can make our eyes sting and our noses burn. They can make our stomachs ache and even make us dizzy.

Our curiosity can help us learn new things, but like Carmen, we need to be careful.

2. Carmen’s Exploration

Distribute the Student Workbooks.

Open the book you put “Carmen’s Letter” in before the lesson and allow “Carmen’s Letter” to fall out. Oh, class, look what I just found! Carmen left us a note. It says...

Hi Everyone!

I am sorry I couldn’t be in class to tell you this story myself, but it was just too good not to journal. Ha! “Journal.” You’ll get why that’s funny after my story.

Class, before I continue with Carmen’s story, she needs our help doing home safety checks. Open your workbook to pages 16 and 17. When Carmen enters a room, I will say, “Freeze, Carmen.” Then we will do a safety check. We will look in the room Carmen entered and cross out anything dangerous for children or pets to smell, taste, or drink.

Ready? Here we go!
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Last Saturday, I saw my brother, Toby, writing in a red, sparkly notebook. When I walked by him, he quickly closed the book, hid it behind his back, and left the room.

I was very curious. I didn’t know what was in this secret book, but I was determined to find it and read it while Toby was at soccer practice.

With a rattle and a click of the door, my brother was off to soccer practice. I dashed downstairs to begin my investigation determined to find where he hid his book. Our dad always tells us not to snoop around, but it isn’t snooping if I have my detective’s cap on, right?

My search started in the bathroom.

Freeze, Carmen! Class, cross out anything in the bathroom that is dangerous for children or pets to smell, taste, or drink.

允许 time for the students to complete the activity.

Which items did you cross out in the bathroom?  🚽 Toilet bowl cleaner, bathroom cleaner, and bleach.

Cleaners are helpful for adults to use when cleaning, but these products are not safe to smell, taste, or drink.

Now that the bathroom is safe for Carmen, let’s continue with her story.

My brother loves taking baths. Maybe he hid it with the bath toys. I dug through the toy basket and found my favorite rubber octopus but nothing red and sparkling. No luck in this room, but no worries, I know just where to look next.

My brother loves to read in the kitchen. He sits in the same chair every time he reads. Follow me into the kitchen.

Freeze, Carmen! Let’s do a safety check of the kitchen.  🚽 Allow time for the students to complete the activity. Which items did you cross out in the kitchen?  🍻 Beer, liquor, and the wine.
Beer, wine, and liquor all contain alcohol. Alcohol changes the way the mind and body work. Adults twenty-one years and older may choose to drink alcohol, but it is not safe for children.

Now that the kitchen is safe, let’s continue with Carmen’s story.

I sat in his chair to try to see what my brother sees. Before you could say, “the cat’s out of the bag,” I jumped toward something sparkly. I thought I found it, but it was just a bag of treats. With a loud crinkle and a crash, I was enjoying a tasty kitty treat. So much for finding the book in here, but I haven’t been thinking like the alley cat my brother is. Follow me out to the garage.

Freeze, Carmen! Let’s do another safety check for Carmen. □ Allow time for the students to complete the activity. Which items did you cross out in the garage? □ Motor oil, weed killer, and gas.

These products have harmful chemicals in them and are not safe to smell, taste, or drink.

The garage is safe, let’s continue with Carmen’s story.

Our dad keeps most of the drawers locked in the garage, so the item must be in Toby’s favorite chair or in his bike basket. His chair was empty and so was his basket.

I’m running out of places to look, and he will be home from soccer practice any minute now!

I was feeling defeated by this challenge when I saw the porch swing swaying in the wind. That’s one of our favorite places to sit after dinner. It has to be there. Everyone, I’ll race you there!

Freeze, Carmen! Let’s do one more safety check for Carmen. □ Allow time for the students to complete the activity. Which items did you cross off on the porch? □ Cigar, vape, and cigarettes.

Cigars, cigarettes, and vapes are all tobacco products. They all have a chemical called nicotine in them that is harmful to the brain and body. These products are not safe for children to use.

Teaching Tip
The FDA considers all electronic nicotine delivery systems, including vapes and electronic cigarettes, to be tobacco products.
Now that the porch is safe, let’s go back to Carmen’s story.

I searched high and I searched low. Feeling sad, I climbed up on the porch swing to pout. I was about to take my detective’s cap off when I thought of one spot I hadn’t searched. His bedroom!

I ran upstairs as fast as I could. And there I spotted it. A red sparkly corner of the book was sticking out from under his pillow. I grabbed it and raced downstairs, but my dad stopped me right in my tracks. “What do you have there?” he asked while taking the book from my paws. I explained that I was pretending to be a detective. My dad just laughed.

On the cover of the book Toby had written, “Toby’s Journal. Detective Carmen, keep out.” When my dad showed me, I laughed too.

The end.

3. Safety First

If Carmen had gone into a room before we did our safety checks, what could have happened? 🐱 Carmen could have gotten hurt; she might have gotten into something she isn’t supposed to; her whiskers could have twitched; her eyes might have burned; etc.

If we didn’t do our safety checks first, the dangerous items would still been in each room.

What should Carmen do the next time she finds dangerous items like this in a room? 🐱 Leave the room and tell an adult.

Let’s review what to do if we see these items around the house. Turn to page 18 in your workbook. Each picture has a sentence that is missing one word. We will use the words from the word bank to complete each sentence. The words are LEAVE, TELL, DON’T, and ADULT.

Look at the first picture. The sentence says, “If there is an open bottle of alcohol on the table, tell an ______.”

Workbook page 18
Safety Measures

Teaching Tip
If your students are able, select volunteers to read the words in the word bank aloud to the class.
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What is the missing word? Is it LEAVE, TELL, DON’T, or ADULT? 

Adult. That’s right; if there is an open bottle of alcohol on the table, you should tell an adult. Write down the word ADULT on the line. 

Allow time for the students to complete the activity.

Look at the second picture. The sentence says, “If there are open cleaning supplies in the cupboard, ________ touch them.”

What is the missing word? Is it LEAVE, TELL, DON’T, or ADULT? 

Don’t. Right; if there are open cleaning supplies in the cupboard, don’t touch them. Write down the word DON’T on the line. 

Allow time for the students to complete the activity.

Look at picture three. The sentence says, “If you find an open container of gasoline, ________ an adult.”

What is the missing word? Is it LEAVE, TELL, DON’T, or ADULT? 

Tell. Right; if you see an open container of gasoline, tell an adult. Write down the word TELL on the line. 

Allow time for the students to complete the activity.

The last picture says, “If you smell strong chemicals, __________ the room.”

What is the missing word? Is it LEAVE, TELL, DON’T, or ADULT? 

Leave. If you smell strong chemicals, leave the room. Write down the word LEAVE on the line. 

Allow time for the students to complete the activity.

Just like Carmen, if you see something that could be dangerous stop, don’t touch it, leave the room, and tell an adult.

Collect the Student Workbooks.

Distribute Home Workout 9.
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Identifying & Avoiding Harmful Substances: Daily Workout
Lesson Enrichment Activity

Day 2: Careful Carmen

Purpose: for students to identify items that are safe and unsafe

Materials
To deliver this activity, you will need:

- Safe or Unsafe Cards, Teacher’s Manual page 204

Make one copy of the Safe or Unsafe Cards, cut them apart, and put them in a stack.

Today we are going to sort items that are safe and unsafe for first graders to taste.

Hold up the Safe or Unsafe Cards. I will hold up a card and describe the picture. If the picture is of something safe to taste, pretend to take a bite out of a sandwich. Demonstrate by pretending to hold a sandwich and take a bite. If the item is unsafe to taste, make an X by crossing your arms like this. Demonstrate by making a fist with each hand and crossing your forearms in the shape of an X.

Allow time for the students to complete the activity. The answers are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safe to Taste</th>
<th>Unsafe to Taste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Gasoline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
<td>Cigar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrot</td>
<td>Wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>Beer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Toilet Bowl Cleaner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>Bleach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Insect Spray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td>Cigarettes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You did a great job choosing which items are safe to taste!
Safe or Unsafe Cards

Make one copy of this page and cut the cards apart.
Identifying & Avoiding Harmful Substances: Daily Workout
Lesson Enrichment Activity

Day 3: Curiosity
Purpose: for students to enhance their curiosity in healthy ways

Materials
To deliver this activity, you will need:

• What‘sit? Ball

Today, we are going to think about what we are curious about. To start our activity, I will toss What‘sit? to one student. When you catch the ball, look down at your right hand. Everyone, raise your right hand. ✖️ Raise your right hand and encourage the students to do the same. Great job! When you catch What‘sit? tell me the color your right index finger lands on. Then, I will ask you a question. After you answer the question, toss the ball back to me.

✖️ Use the guide below to ask the students questions.

Green - What animal are you curious about?
Orange - What sports are you curious about?
Yellow - What bugs are you curious about?
Blue - What places are you curious about?
Red - What ice cream flavors are you curious about?
White - What activity are you curious about?

If the student’s right index finger lands on the What‘sit? logo, ask the student to demonstrate their best elephant impersonation.

If the students struggle to come up with an answer, ask the student what he or she was curious about in class today.

Being curious helps us learn new things. Remember to be cautious when you are curious.
Identifying & Avoiding Harmful Substances: Daily Workout
Lesson Enrichment Activity

Day 4: Bathroom Check

**Purpose:** for students to practice identifying harmful substances

**Materials**
To deliver this activity, you will need:

- Projector
- Check it Out Worksheet, Teacher’s Manual page 207

Make a copy of the Check it Out Worksheet and display it using a projector.

Carmen needs our help for one last safety check. The upstairs bathroom never got a safety check, so she has asked us to check it for her.

Look carefully at the picture. If you see anything that is unsafe for Carmen to taste, drink, or smell, raise your hand. I will call on volunteers to name the harmful substance and then cross out the item. Let’s see if we can find all five of the unsafe items to make Carmen’s bathroom safe.

The answers are as follows:

- **Toilet bowl cleaner next to the toilet**
- **Bathroom cleaner next to the tub**
- **Cigarettes on the sink**
- **Glass of wine on the tub**
- **Container of bleach under the towel rack**

Great job! We’ve made Carmen’s bathroom safe for her.
Check it Out Worksheet
Identifying & Avoiding Harmful Substances: Daily Workout
Lesson Enrichment Activity

Day 5: Leave and Tell

Purpose: for students to identify actions to take if they find a harmful substance

Materials
To deliver this activity, you will need:

- Carmen’s Alphabet Cards

Write the following statements on the board or on a piece of flipchart paper. Use lines to represent the missing letters. Cover the statements.

L __ __ VE  THE  __ __ OM

T __ __ L  AN  A__ __ L __

We are all curious, just like Carmen, but we all need to be safe. In the lesson, we taught Carmen what to do if she saw something that could be harmful.

To review how to be safe, we will solve two puzzles. Place letters E, L, D, U, T, A, R, O where everyone can see them. Reveal the puzzles.

L __ __ VE  THE  __ __ OM

T __ __ L  AN  A__ __ L __

To solve the puzzles, we must add the missing letters. I will select one student to come up, choose a letter, and show me where it belongs. If the letter is correct, I will write it in the blank. Then I will call on another student to choose a letter. We will continue until we solve the puzzles.

Puzzle answers: Leave the room and Tell an adult.

If you see a substance that could be harmful, leave the room and tell an adult.