



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY State University of New York

## Preventive Health Series Satellite Broadcast

Thursday, April 27, 2006

9:00am – 10:00am est

## Preventing Unintentional Poisonings



### Speakers

**Gail Banach, MS, Ed**

Director of Education,  
Upstate New York Poison Center

**Norma A. Barton, BS, CSPI**

Certified Specialist in Poison Information, Ruth A.  
Lawrence Poison and Drug Information Center

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### Evaluation

Please visit

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[www.albany.edu/sph/coned/poisoncontrol.htm](http://www.albany.edu/sph/coned/poisoncontrol.htm)

### Call-In

- Ph: 800-452-0662
- Fax: 518-426-0696

## Did You Know?

- Last year Poison Centers in the United States received more than 2 millions calls
- Over 1 million of those calls involved children under the age of 6
- 93 % occurred in a home
- Ingestion was route of exposure in 76% of cases
- Unintentional poisoning CAN be prevented

## Poison Centers

- 24 hour service, 365 days a year
- Free services
- Staff includes physicians, nurses and pharmacists
- Public education programs
- Translation services
- Toll-free number

## What is a Poison?

1. Any substance which may cause harm if swallowed, inhaled or splashed on the skin or in the eyes.
2. Anything that can cause harm if used in the wrong way.

## Types of Exposure

- Four common ways poisonings happen
  - Ingestion – something you eat or drink
  - Dermal – something splashed or spilled on the skin, bites or stings
  - Inhaled – something that is breathed into the lungs
  - Ocular- something splashed or spilled in the eye.

## Why Do Unintentional Poisonings Happen?

- Improper storage of poisons
- Mixing cleaning products (such as bleach & ammonia)
- Medication errors
- Children imitate adults using poisonous products
- Lack of Carbon Monoxide detectors
- Look-Alike Products (ingestion of poison instead of food product)

## Look-Alike Products



## Look-Alike Products



## Most Common Poisoning Substances

- Medications
- Household cleaning products
- Cosmetics & personal care products
- Plants

## Medicines are Potential Poisons

- Use a medicine dropper or spoon specially designed for children when giving medicine as kitchen spoons may vary in size.
- Do not call medicine “candy”. Children should be taught the difference.
- Do not take medicine in front of children as children often imitate adults.
- Tell the doctor, nurse or pharmacist about all medicines (prescription & over the counter), herbals, & vitamins that you take.

## What To Do if a Poisoning Happens

1. Call 911
  - If the patient is:
    - unconscious
    - having difficulty breathing
    - having convulsions
  - if the poisoning is a suicide attempt or suspicious in nature

## What To Do if a Poisoning Happens (cont.)

2. Call the Poison Center and be prepared to give the following information:
  - Your name and phone number
  - Patient's name, age, and weight
  - What was ingested, and how much
  - When the ingestion occurred
  - If the patient has any symptoms

## First Aid for Poisonings

- If Swallowed – Call the Poison Center
  - Do not induce vomiting
  - Do not eat or drink anything
- If Inhaled – Call the Poison Center
  - Victim needs fresh air quickly

## First Aid For Poisonings (cont.)

- If Splashed on skin – Call the Poison Center
  - Remove contaminated items
  - Rinse with running water 15-20 minutes
- If Splashed in Eyes – Call the Poison Center
  - Rinse with running water 15-20 minutes



## Tips for Poison Prevention

- Store products out of reach of children
- Use cabinet locks
- Store food and non-food separately
- Do not mix cleaning products
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in sleeping areas

## Tips for Poison Prevention

- Label all plants by name
- Use child-resistant caps
- Keep products in original containers
- Don't call medicine candy
- Post the number for Poison Center on all phones



## How Care Providers Can Help

- Inform your clients and staff that the Poison Center is the place to call for help in a poison emergency or for poison prevention information.
- Instruct clients that children under 6 are at highest risk for unintentional poisoning.
- Teach clients that unintentional poisonings also happen to adults.

## How Care Providers Can Help (cont.)

- Encourage all families to keep the toll-free Poison Center number near their telephone.
- Have poison prevention information readily available to clients in appropriate languages.
- Call your local poison center to receive additional materials to distribute and to learn about educational workshops available in your area.

## In Conclusion

In a poison emergency ....  
or  
For poison prevention information...

**Call the Poison Center –  
1-800-222-1222**

*We're only a phone call away!*

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