



American Association of Poison Control Centers

NEWS RELEASE

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American Association of Poison Control Centers Celebrates 53rd Annual National Poison Prevention Week

ALEXANDRIA, VA – The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) will join poison centers and poison prevention partners across the country in celebrating National Poison Prevention Week March 15-21, 2015. Since 1962, the President of the United States has proclaimed the third week of March as National Poison Prevention Week to raise awareness about the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them.

This year's observance will focus on several poison-prevention-related themes:

- Monday, March 16 – Children Act Fast ... So Do Poisons
- Tuesday, March 17 – Poison Centers: Saving You Time and Money
- Wednesday, March 18 – Poisonings Span a Lifetime
- Thursday, March 19 – Home, Safe Home
- Friday, March 20 – Medication Safety

“Medications and household products used in the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person can be dangerous, and poisonings can happen anywhere to anyone,” said AAPCC President Jay Schauben, PharmD, DABAT, FAACT. “The health professionals at America’s poison centers are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to help those with poisoning emergencies or to answer information questions about medications, household products, chemicals, bites and stings, plants and mushrooms, and many other things. Poison Prevention Week offers us a great opportunity to highlight how people can prevent poison exposures as well as raise awareness about the immediate availability of health professionals at the poison centers.”

According to the CDC, poisoning is the No. 1 cause of injury death in the U.S., with most of these deaths due to drug and medicine misuse and abuse. In 2013, U.S. poison centers answered more than 3.1 million calls, including approximately 2.2 million calls concerning human exposures to poisons. Just under half of all exposure cases managed by poison centers involved children younger than six, but as in previous years the more serious cases occurred in adolescents and adults.

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In 2013, 93 percent of human exposures occurred at a residence, but they can also occur in the workplace, schools, healthcare facilities and elsewhere. About 70 percent of the 2.2 million poison exposures reported to poison centers were treated at home, saving millions of dollars in medical expenses. In fact, poison centers save Americans more than \$1.8 billion every year in medical costs and lost productivity.

“Our nation’s 55 poison centers play a crucial role in keeping Americans safe by providing poison prevention and free, expert information and advice,” said AAPCC Executive Director Stephen Kaminski, JD. “In addition to the public, emergency clinicians and pediatricians rely on poison center professionals to help treat their patients. In fact, about 20 percent of all poison center exposure calls come from health care providers. It’s good to know that expert help is just a phone call away when the unthinkable happens. Please program your mobile phone with the Poison Help number and post it on your refrigerator and near your home phone: 1-800-222-1222.”

For more information, the media may contact Brett Schuster, AAPCC associate manager, Public Relations and Member Services, at 703.894.1865 or schuster@aapcc.org.

AAPCC supports the nation’s 55 poison center members in their efforts to treat and prevent drug, consumer product, animal, environmental and food poisoning. Members staff the Poison Help hotline at 1-800-222-1222 that provides free, confidential, expert medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year from toxicology specialists, including nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and poison information providers. In addition, AAPCC maintains the only poison information and surveillance database in the United States, providing real-time monitoring of unusual poisoning patterns, chemical exposures and other emerging public health hazards. AAPCC partners with federal agencies such as EPA, HRSA and the CDC, as well as private industry.

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