

News from CPSC

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

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National Poison Prevention Week Launch: Young Children Remain Most Vulnerable for Unintentional Poisonings

WASHINGTON, D.C. – For the past 45 years, National Poison Prevention Week has worked to educate and inform consumers of the dangers of unintentional poisonings. These efforts have contributed to a significant decline in injuries and deaths.

But there are still about 30 children younger than 5 years old who die from unintentional poisonings each year. Most of these poisonings are from products commonly found in the home. About 85,000 young children visited U.S. hospital emergency rooms due to unintentional poisonings in 2004.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the National Poison Prevention Week Council, and the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) today reported these deaths and injuries at a news conference to kick off National Poison Prevention Week (March 19-25, 2006).

“Back in the 1960s, the number of deaths each year from unintentional poisoning was 15 times greater than it is today,” said CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton. “Now there are literally thousands of young people alive today who would have died without child-resistant packaging and other measures that protect children from poisoning hazards.”

To further reduce the number of unintentional poisoning deaths and injuries, CPSC recommends that the entire family do its part. Parents should keep items in their original containers and leave the original labels on the products and read labels before use. Grandparents should use child-resistant packaging and keep all household products and medicines locked up, out of sight and out of reach of young children. Older children should be aware of the dangers associated with poisonings and help their parents keep younger siblings in sight; this means taking them along when answering the phone or doorbell.

In addition to the poison prevention tips above, parents and caregivers should follow these safety tips to reduce the risk of unintentional poisonings.

1. Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container securely after each use or, if available, choose child-resistant unit packaging, which does not need to be re-secured.
2. Call (800) 222-1222 immediately in case of poisoning.
3. Do not put decorative lamps and candles that contain lamp oil where children can reach them. Lamp oil can be very toxic if ingested by young children.
4. Always turn the light on when giving or taking medicine so you can see what you are taking. Check the dosage every time.
5. Avoid taking medicine in front of children.

“Proper and safe storage, use and supervision of all household products can substantially reduce accidents in the home,” said Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, and chair of the Poison Prevention Week Council. “Take away the opportunities for accidents to happen and you can literally save lives.”

According to AAPCC, poison control centers nationwide received about 1.2 million calls about poison exposures involving children 5 years and younger in 2004. Among the potentially toxic household products referenced in calls to the poison control centers were:

- Personal care products, including baby oil and mouthwash containing ethanol;
- Cleaning substances, including drain openers and oven cleaners;
- Over-the-counter pain relievers – including ibuprofen, acetaminophen, and aspirin – and cough and cold medicines;
- Hydrocarbons, such as lamp oil and furniture polish; and
- Adult-strength vitamins and supplements containing iron.

“While we recognize the significant strides that have been made in poison prevention, every day there are new parents, grandparents and childcare providers who may not be aware of the potential for poisonings,” said Kathy Wruk, president of AAPCC.

To get a free packet of poison prevention publications, write to “Poison Prevention Packet,” P.O. Box 1543, Washington, DC 20013, or visit www.poisonprevention.org. For additional information about poison prevention and poison control centers, visit www.aapcc.org.

VIDEO ALERT

SATELLITE COORDINATES (C-BAND)

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|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| DATE: | Thursday, March 16 | Friday, March 17th |
| TIME: | 2:30 – 3:00 p.m. ET | 10:30 – 11 a.m. ET |
| COORD: | IA 5/7 | IA 5/23 |
| DOWNLINK FREQ: | 3840 V | 4160 V |
| AUDIO: | 6.2 & 6.8 | 6.2 & 6.8 |

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