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**HOME SAFETY COUNCIL® RESEARCH SHOWS MAJORITY OF HOUSEHOLDS
ARE UNPREPARED TO PREVENT POISONING INJURIES**

*Findings Reveal Urgent Need for Education and Action
to Keep Those at Greatest Risk from Poisoning*

Washington D.C. – Accidental poisoning is the second-leading cause of home injury death, yet many caregivers are not taking the proper steps to keep family members safe from poisoning in the home. In fact, each year more than two million poisonings are reported to the nation's Poison Control Centers.

During National Poison Prevention Week, March 18—24, the national nonprofit Home Safety Council is encouraging caregivers to take steps to reduce the risk of poisoning exposure by safely storing dangerous items, posting the Poison Control Hotline number (1-800-222-1222) next to every phone at home and carefully reading product warning labels. Reading product labels can help caregivers understand the dangers that household cleaners, chemicals and cosmetics may present to young children. Products with the words 'Caution,' 'Warning' or 'Danger' on the labels should be locked away and stored out of children's reach.

"Hand-to-mouth behavior and imitation are normal for young children, and anything within reach will likely go into their mouths," said Dr. Angela Mickalide, director of education and outreach for the Home Safety Council. "Without proper safety measures in place, children's natural curiosity paired with their inability to tell the difference between poisons and non-toxic look-alikes can result in a tragic poisoning."

Age Groups at Greatest Risk

Young children and older adults are among the age groups at greatest risk for a poisoning exposure within the home. In fact, children under the age of five report the highest rate of nonfatal poison exposures at home compared to any other age group¹. Common household items, from medications and cleaners to automotive fluids and pesticides, present serious risks – especially for children. Despite these dangers, Home Safety Council research reveals that in more than 80 percent of homes with young children, caregivers admit leaving medicines in unsecured locations and more than 50 percent report leaving dangerous household chemicals accessible to children².

Older adults, especially those who are taking multiple medications, also face an increased risk for poisoning. Home Safety Council research shows that nearly one in ten caregivers of an older adult age 60 or older recently reported that their loved one had experienced a poisoning incident at home, most frequently from taking the wrong type of medications. Despite the increased risk of poisoning among older adults, less than half of their adult caregivers (48 percent) reported having important emergency numbers, including the Poison Control Hotline next to every phone in the home³.

"With more than 90 percent of poisonings occurring in the home, everyone needs to be aware of the precautions they can take to reduce the risk of poison exposure," said Dr. Mickalide.

The Home Safety Council recommends that adults walk through the rooms where harmful products are most commonly stored, especially the kitchen, bathrooms and garage, and follow the guidelines below to help keep the entire family protected against poisonings at home.

Poison Prevention Tips

1. Know what things in and around your home could poison you.
2. Put child safety locks on cabinets to safely store cleaners, medicines, cosmetics, chemicals and other poisons.
3. Keep all of these products in their original packaging with the labels on them.
4. Look at product labels for the words “Caution”, “Warning”, “Danger” or “Poison” on the box or bottle. Follow directions carefully when using these products.
5. Be aware that fuels (such as gasoline), car fluids (such as anti-freeze), pesticides (such as bug killers), and lawn and garden products (such as fertilizer) are poison.
6. Do not mix household products together because their contents could react with dangerous results.
7. Install a carbon monoxide (CO) detector near the bedrooms and the furnace (at least 15 feet away) to warn you of high levels of CO, a deadly gas you cannot see or smell. The gas collects when fuels are burned. Too much collected gas can harm you.
8. Have a service person check heaters, stoves and fireplaces every year to see that they work well.
9. Keep the Poison Control Hotline number by every phone or on the refrigerator: 1-800-222-1222.
10. Know to call 1-800-222-1222 if someone takes poison. This number will connect you to emergency help in your area. You can also call the hotline if you have a question about poisons. It’s free, private, and can save you a trip to the emergency room.

Poison Control Hotline: 1-800-222-1222

Every Poison Control Center in the country can be reached by calling the American Association of Poison Control Centers’ (AAPCC) nationwide hotline, 1-800-222-1222. Post the hotline, along with other emergency numbers near every phone. Use the hotline to call immediately in the event of a possible poisoning. The hotline also provides local poison control information.

For more information on how to prevent poison dangers at home, visit www.homesafetycouncil.org or www.1-800-222-1222.info.

About Home Safety Council

The Home Safety Council (HSC) is the only national nonprofit organization solely dedicated to preventing home related injuries that result in nearly 20,000 deaths and 21 million medical visits on average each year. Through national programs, partnerships and the support of volunteers, HSC educates people of all ages to be safer in and around their homes. The Home Safety Council is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization located in Washington, DC.

¹ State of Home Safety in America™ report, Home Safety Council (2004).

² Safe Haven: a national survey of parents’ home safety perceptions and actions, Home Safety Council (2006).

³ Safe Haven: examining the home safety practices and perceptions of those caring for an older adult, Home Safety Council (2007).