



Utah Poison Control Center

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Utah Poison Control Center, American Association of Poison Control Centers to Celebrate National Poison Prevention Week

Saving lives 24/7 – poison centers provide free, confidential medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. Poisoning is a big deal! Poisoning is now the leading cause of death from injuries in the United States – ahead of motor vehicle crashes and guns.

The 50th Anniversary of National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) runs March 18th – March 24th. It was established in 1961 to call attention to the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent poisonings from occurring. Recent safety interventions, such as child resistant closures and poison prevention campaigns, have saved thousands of lives. In an effort to continue to raise awareness about poison prevention, the Utah Poison Control Center (UPCC) joins poison centers around the country to celebrate National Poison Prevention Week. Governor Gary R. Herbert signed a proclamation declaring this week as Poison Prevention Week in Utah.

"Poisonings Span a Lifetime" is the theme of National Poison Prevention Week. In addition to raising awareness about childhood poisonings, the Utah Poison Control Center seeks to raise concern about accidental poisonings in all age groups. An alarming trend today is the increase in adult poisoning deaths, often due to unintentional overdoses of prescription pain medication," said Barbara Insley Crouch, PharmD, MSPH director of the UPCC. Most calls to poison centers are about children, but most people who die from poisons are adults. Poisoning is a danger for all of us. Poison centers are for everyone. Even doctors and nurses call the experts at poison centers for treatment advice for their patients.

"Our poison center provides assistance to individuals exposed to toxic substances 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Crouch. "While we recognize that prevention is the best possible remedy, our specialists are ready to respond at any time to any poison emergency." Not sure if it's an emergency? Don't wait - call the poison center right away to find out.

Each year, over 50,000 calls are received by the UPCC. More than 60% of the exposures involve children less than six years of age. In 2010, 94% of all poisonings occurred in the home. Fortunately 79% were managed on site with telephone follow-up. Therefore, it is critical to safeguard the home environment. The Utah Poison Control Center reminds everyone to make poisoning prevention a year-round responsibility.

In all, U.S. poison centers answered more than 4.2 million calls in 2010, including nearly 2.5 million calls about human exposures to poison, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers. On average, U.S. poison centers received one call concerning a suspected or actual human poison exposure every 12.7 seconds.

The top three poison categories in children involve:

- Cosmetics and personal care products
- Household cleaning products
- Pain killers such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen

The top three poison categories in adults involve:

- Pain killers including narcotics and over-the-counter analgesics
- Sedatives (drugs to reduce anxiety) and hypnotics (sleep aids)
- Antidepressants

Events like NPPW emphasize the most common poisoning risks for adults and children, and offer educational resources for parents to protect their children and adults to make informed decisions regarding use of medications. Prevention is the best medicine, but in the event of an exposure, your poison center can be reached at 1-800-222-1222. Program your cell phone with the Poison Help number and post it near your home phone. For more information on National Poison Prevention Week or poison prevention in general, visit www.utahpoisoncontrol.org, or call the UPCC at 1-800-222-1222.

About the Utah Poison Control Center

The Utah Poison Control Center was established in 1954. It was one of the first poison centers in the United States. The UPCC is a program of the University of Utah, College of Pharmacy; staffed around-the-clock with pharmacists and nurses with additional training in clinical toxicology.

About the American Association of Poison Control Centers:

The American Association of Poison Control Centers is a non-profit, national organization founded in 1958 that represents the poison control centers of the United States and the interests of poison prevention and treatment of poisoning.

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