

Health Bulletin



Poison-Related Fatalities On The Rise

(NAPSA)—Poisoning is now the leading cause of injury death, surpassing even motor vehicle accident fatalities, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This increase is due mostly to a surge in drug-related poisonings, with drugs causing nine out of 10 poisonings.

Unintentional Poisonings Can Happen to Anyone

Poisonings can happen to anyone, from children to seniors and everyone in between. Many people think that the Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222, which connects callers to their local poison center, is only for emergencies involving kids, but that isn't true. Poison centers not only provide treatment advice, they also answer questions about plants, mushrooms, bites and stings from insects, spiders, reptiles and marine life, herbal and dietary supplements, food poisoning and substances of abuse.

Dangers at Home

Take a look around your home. You may be surprised to learn that the leading substances involved in poisonings reported to poison centers are right in front of you. Potential poisons include over-the-counter medicines, cosmetics, household cleaning products and prescription medications. But don't worry, there are simple ways to better poisonproof your home.

Simple Steps to Prevent Tragedy

There are steps you can take to protect you and your family:

- Follow child-resistant packaging instructions and lock medicines up, away and out of sight.
- Read medicine labels and follow their instructions.



Poisoning deaths are on the rise—learn how to protect your family.

- Talk to your doctor and pharmacist if you have any questions about safe medicine dosage and usage.

- Do not share prescriptions.

- Never mix household or chemical products together.

- When in doubt, call the Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222, which connects you to your local poison center. You do not have to have an emergency to call. Post the number by your home phone and program it into your cell phone for easy access.

A Valuable Resource

When you call the Poison Help line, about 70 percent of poisonings can be taken care of over the phone, saving unnecessary trips to the hospital or doctor's office. Poison centers are staffed by nurses, pharmacists, doctors and other specially trained poison experts, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Calls are free and confidential. Help is available in over 160 languages. Services are also available for the hearing impaired. To learn more, visit www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov, which is available in English and Spanish.