**Poison Prevention Tips from the Nebraska Regional Poison Center**

Poisonings are a leading cause of unintentional injury death in the U.S. While the majority of poison-related exposures occur in children under 5 years of age, deaths among young children have decreased over the years in great part to poison centers’ accessibility to the public and their efforts to provide public education and sound the alarm on the dangers of household products and medications. Currently, the majority of poisoning fatalities result from medication overdoses in adults.

Many poisonings are preventable and expert help is just a phone call away. Poison control centers save lives and health care dollars. The Nebraska Regional Poison Center is staffed by experienced, nationally-certified registered nurses and physicians who provide immediate assistance to health care providers and the public regarding the treatment of poisoning exposures 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More than 75% of poisoning exposure cases are managed at home, greatly reducing the need for a costly emergency department visit.

Here are some poison prevention tips to protect yourself and your family:

* Program the toll-free number for the poison center (1-800-222-1222) into your cell phone or text “poison” to 797979 to save the contact information for poison control.
* Be sure to read and follow medicine labels every time. Never take larger or more frequent doses of your medications to try to get faster or more powerful effects.
* Never share your medicine with others or use someone else's medicine.
* Remember to always use the dosing device that comes with the medicine container.
* Check medications’ active ingredients, especially when taking more than one product, to avoid taking the same medication twice. For example, acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be found in a variety of fever reducers, pain medications, cold, and flu medications. Taking acetaminophen too often or at too high of a dose can cause liver damage and other toxic effects.
* Store all medicines out of reach and sight of children. Be aware that children are at risk when guests bring medications into your home.
* Dispose of all unwanted and expired medications. The poison center can direct you to the nearest location to dispose of them.
* Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas with no color, odor or taste. Nebraska has one of the highest CO fatality rates in the U.S. A functioning CO detector should be located near all sleeping areas and on every level of your home.
* Be aware of where the disc batteries are in your home. They may be found in remote controls, key fobs, watches and toys. These batteries have caused fatalities in children.
* Laundry detergent packets (pods) are convenient, but also attractive to children and toxic when ingested or rubbed into eyes. Be sure all cleaning materials are stored in original containers and up and out of sight of children.
* Never mix household products together. For example, mixing bleach with acid-containing cleaners or with ammonia can result in toxic gases.
* Flavored refills for electronic cigarettes contain high concentrations of nicotine, which can be fatal to children if ingested.

***Call the poison center 1-800-222-1222 before you head to the emergency room for a poisoning. Your call is free and confidential. You will speak with a Registered Nurse or Pharmacist. You will be given expert advice 24/7/365! Your call is free and confidential.***