

For Immediate Release

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Goodbye Summer...Hello New School Year!
Back to School Poison Prevention Tips for Families

Chicago, IL (August 30, 2011) – As schools throughout Illinois get ready to open their doors to welcome students for another school year, families must also prepare. For most families, summer schedules and school schedules are drastically different. To make the transition a little easier, the Illinois Poison Center offers quick and easy poison prevention safety tips just in time for the new school year.

School and Art Supplies

- Most school supplies are minimally toxic, however be sure children use art products safely by reading labels carefully, following the directions for safe use and disposal and cleaning up tables, desks, and counters appropriately.
- Teach kids not to eat or drink while using art products.
- Silica gel packets: the small round balls inside are harmless; it's just like getting a mouthful of sand at the beach. The only potential danger of silica gel packets is that they are a choking hazard, so do dispose of them as soon as you bring your new purchases home.

Medications

- Read and follow directions and warnings on all labels before giving your child medicine;
- Teach your children never take other people's prescription drugs. Never give your child prescription medication unless it has been prescribed for them specifically by a doctor.

Hand sanitizer:

While a lick or taste of hand sanitizer is usually minimally toxic, more could make a toddler intoxicated. To avoid misuse or unintentional ingestions, the IPC advises:

- Parent should advise children on its proper use and purpose.
- Hand sanitizer use should be supervised by an adult.
- Teach children to apply a dime-sized amount to dry hands and rub hands together until completely dry.
- Washing hands with soap and water is still the best method for removing dirt and germs.

Lunch Box Preparation:

- Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly before preparing your child's lunch box.
- Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Pack foods in insulated containers.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables.

These are just a few tips that you can use to get your family back into the swing of things for the new school year. However, in the event that a poisoning occurs, the Illinois Poison Center provides those who live and work in Illinois with access to comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances via a free and confidential 24-hour national hotline – 1800-222-1222.

For more poison prevention tips for everyday, or to get FREE poison prevention educational materials such as stickers, magnets, posters, children's activity sheets, etc. visit the Illinois Poison Center's website www.illinoispoisoncenter.org.

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The Illinois Poison Center is a non-profit health service that provides the people of Illinois with comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances via a free, confidential 24-hour hotline staffed by specially trained doctors, nurses and pharmacists.

The nation's oldest and largest poison center, the IPC is the state's leading source of advanced toxicology training and consultation to healthcare professionals. The IPC also educates the general public on poison prevention and potentially harmful substances via community outreach and online training programs.

Through its services, the IPC saves lives, improves patient care and saves the people of Illinois an estimated \$50 million annually in unnecessary healthcare costs by reducing 911 calls, doctor and ER visits, and time spent in hospitals.

The IPC is a program of the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council.