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Illinois Poison Center Kicks Off Illinois Poison Prevention Month as Decreed By Governor Rauner

Nation's oldest poison center to hold hundreds of events statewide

CHICAGO – March 2, 2015 – The Illinois Poison Center (IPC) launches [Illinois Poison Prevention Month \(IPPM\)](#) this week with hundreds of free, public education events scheduled this month. The nation's oldest poison center uses the signature month of March to further spread the message of poison prevention to families and communities across Illinois.

[Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner has declared March 2015 Illinois Poison Prevention Month](#) and encourages all citizens to learn more about the IPC's poison prevention programs. National Poison Prevention Week, established by Congress in 1961, is the nationwide effort to educate communities on poison prevention and the dangers of unintentional poisonings. This year's national Poison Prevention Week is March 15-21, 2015.

"Poison prevention education is vital to the public's safety," said IPC Medical Director Michael Wahl, MD. "Children, young adults and the elderly are some the most at-risk populations for poisonings; it is crucial that we raise the level of awareness among all Illinoisans."

In 2014, the IPC handled nearly 80,000 calls on potentially harmful substances, with almost half of those involving children five years of age and under. In Illinois, more people are hospitalized for poisoning than for injuries from firearms and motor vehicle collisions combined.

The IPC encourages residents to take advantage of videos, activity sheets and other educational materials available on the [IPC website](#) and the [IPC blog](#). These include "[My Child Ate...](#)", an online library of potentially harmful substances often ingested by children. The page is meant to serve as an informational resource as parents increasingly turn to the internet to search "my child ate..."

IPC staff and volunteers will distribute more than tens of thousands of educational packets this month to Illinoisans to help create safer home environments and raise awareness about the free, confidential expert helpline service for children and adults. Pharmacy students from Chicago State University, Rosalind Franklin University, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and the University of Illinois-Chicago as well as a number of hospitals, schools of nursing, public health departments and individual volunteer educators have partnered with the IPC to conduct

outreach programs on poison prevention for pre-kindergarten, elementary and middle school students throughout the state.

If you suspect that you or someone you know has been exposed to a potentially harmful substance, please call the Illinois Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

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*The **Illinois Poison Center** is a nonprofit 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 helpline staffed by specially trained physicians, nurses and pharmacists.*