



222 S. Riverside Plaza
Chicago, IL 60606
TDD 312-906-6185
Fax 312-627-8006
www.IllinoisPoisonCenter.org

For Immediate Release

Contact: Najja Howard
312-906-6175
nhoward@ilpoison.org

Illinois Poison Center Celebrates IL Poison Prevention Month and National Poison Prevention Week in March

January 26th, 2011 (Chicago, IL) – Each year, the third week in March is recognized as National Poison Prevention Week (March 14-20); however in 2009 Governor Pat Quinn declared March to be Illinois Poison Prevention Month because of its importance and encourages all residents to educate themselves about the potentially dangerous substances in their homes. This year's theme is "*You did what?! No issue is too big or small... just call 1-800-222-1222*". To learn more about Illinois Poison Prevention Month and how to get involved please visit the Illinois Poison Center's new website www.illinoispoisoncenter.org, for more information.

"Poison prevention education is vital to the public's safety," said Michael Wahl, MD, managing medical director, IPC. "By using the entire month of March as a means to increase awareness of this serious health issue, we hope to reduce the incidence and injury caused by poisonings."

Year after year, millions of accidental poisonings occur in America – the majority of them affecting children. Last year, the Illinois Poison Center (IPC) handled more than 90,000 exposure and information calls – 52 percent involving children age 5 and under – on everything from household chemicals and carbon monoxide to medicines and mushrooms.

According to Illinois Poison Center experts, preparing yourself and your family is the best way to avoid a potential poisoning.

IPC Tips to Prevent Poisonings:

- Store all food and beverages in a completely separate area away from cleaners, medicines, automotive, yard and healthcare products.
- Keep medicines and household products in their original containers with original labels
- Always read labels before using medicines, cleaners and other products
- Teach children to ask first before eating or drinking anything

- Never call medicine candy or make a game out of taking it
- Keep the IPC phone number, 1-800-222-1222, near all phones in the house and store the number in your cell phone

Free poison prevention training and educational materials available to anyone living/working in Illinois at www.IllinoisPoisonCenter.org/outreach

Established by Congress in 1961, National Poison Prevention Week is an opportunity to educate communities on poison prevention and the dangers of unintentional poisonings. The Illinois Poison Center is staffed by trained experts who provide free, comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances to the public and healthcare professionals via a 24-hour hotline: 1-800-222-1222.

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.

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