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**Spring Forward with Safety: Seasonal tips from the Illinois Poison Center**

*Nation's oldest poison center offers suggestions for avoiding accidental exposures*

Chicago (April 15, 2015) – Because of the spring season's slow start this year, many Illinois families are anxious to get outside for springtime housework, home improvement and holiday celebrations. The Illinois Poison Center (IPC) is reminding kids and adults alike of potential seasonal hazards related to spring cleaning, gardening, flowers and mushrooms, allergies and outdoor celebrations.

“Taking a few simple steps to avoid accidental exposures will ensure both kids and adults are able to enjoy the warm weather and the activities that come with the change of seasons,” said IPC Director Carol DesLauriers, PharmD, DABAT.

To protect children and adults from exposures, the IPC offers the following suggestions for poison-proofing your home:

**Spring Cleaning:**

- Make sure all cleaning products are properly labeled and in their original container
- Do not mix cleaning chemicals together – some combinations can produce highly toxic fumes and gases
- Work in well-ventilated areas
- Always keep an eye on cleaning product bottles—don't walk away and leave them unattended as that is when unintentional pediatric exposures are most likely to occur
- Don't place or store cleaning products near food products or eating areas

**Garden and outdoor areas:**

- Label all the plants in and around the house with their common and botanical names
- Check with a local greenhouse or florist to identify unknown plants
- Teach children not to touch mushrooms, berries or any part of a plant, or to put them in their mouths
- Always store lawn chemicals in the original containers, complete with labels that list ingredients and directions for use
- Do not apply pesticides outdoors on a windy day

- Keep children and pets away during pesticide application for as long as directed on the product label

**Seasonal allergies:**

- Consult with your physician or pharmacist for information about taking the right seasonal allergy medication
- Read all medication labels every time, and follow the directions
- Never take someone else's prescribed medication

**Outdoor fun:**

- Store outdoor and pool products in their original containers with original, intact labels, and keep them locked away—for example, tiki torch oil looks like apple juice or cooking oil, but can be fatal if ingested
- Apply sunscreen and bug repellants according to directions
- Properly handle, cook and store food to prevent the growth of bacteria that can cause food poisoning – keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold
- Keep alcoholic drinks out of the reach of children

For more information on spring safety, please visit [illinoispoisoncenter.org/spring\\_safety](http://illinoispoisoncenter.org/spring_safety).

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.*