



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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'Poisonings Span a Lifetime,' injury prevention proponents warn

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"Poisonings Span a Lifetime!" is the theme of the 48th annual National Poison Prevention Week, March 15 – 21. National Poison Prevention Week is a time to raise awareness about the dangers of poisons among all ages, and how to contact the poison center for help.

Gov. Bob Riley has shown his support by proclaiming March 15 – 21, 2009, as Poison Prevention Week in Alabama.

An estimated 2.5 million poisonings are reported in the U.S. each year. Two-thirds are children 19 years of age and younger, but another 34 percent occur in adults. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, poisonings are second only to motor vehicle crashes as a leading cause of unintentional injury death; first for 35 to 54 years olds.

Dr. John Fisher, director of the Alabama Poison Center explains, "Nearly 53 percent of all calls to the Alabama Poison Center involve children under 6 years of age. There were more than 12,000 children exposed to poisons in Alabama during 2008 alone. Many poisoning exposures occur during the daily routines, or due to recklessness while a product is in use. Poisonings are preventable!

"Never leave a child out of sight while the product is in use, and only use products as they are intended," warns Dr. Fisher. "Poisonings can occur everywhere to anyone too! Nearly one-third of all the exposure calls and more than 70 percent of all poison deaths occur in adults age 20 to 59. Around 90 percent of the reported poisonings occur in the home. Poisoning is a problem for everyone."

The Alabama Poison Center recommends the following safety precautions to help reduce risk of poison exposure:

- * Keep all medicines out of reach of children.
- * Never refer to medicine as candy.
- * Use child-resistant caps on medication bottles.
- * Keep all chemicals in only the original containers.
- * Avoid taking medicine in front of children - they often attempt to mimic the adults.
- * Use lights when taking medicine in the dark.
- * Wear glasses to avoid taking the wrong medicine by mistake.
- * Never store chemicals in food containers.
- * Use products only as instructed on label.

If poisoning happens, call the Alabama Poison Center at once.

Don't forget to poison proof garages, basements and storage areas for items such as pesticides, herbicides, automotive products, flower bulbs or fertilizers. For further information or questions, call the Alabama Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

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3/13/09