



Promoting your National Poison Prevention Week Events

As you work with your poison control center to plan activities for National Poison Prevention Week held the third full week of March each year, consider how to promote what you are doing to ensure maximum visibility within your community. Your local poison control center may already have media outreach plans, so be sure to contact them at 1-800-222-1222 to see how you can support existing media efforts. There are many ways you can collaborate with your poison control center to promote an event, including reaching out to the members of your local media and engaging local influencers to lend support to your cause. Following are some tips on how to promote your local event during National Poison Prevention Week.

Joining With Your Poison Control Center to Work With the Media

It is the job of your local media (TV, radio, and newspaper) to cover news that affects the area's residents. Reporters may learn about your event and express interest without any prompting, but several things can help you and your poison control center catch their attention. Provide them with the information they need, in the format they need it, to increase the likelihood that they will cover your event.

The single most important ingredient to catch the attention of a reporter is news. News by definition is something that has sufficient relevance to the general public or a specific audience. Hosting a local event is often not enough to pique the interest of a reporter. You must give the reporter a sense of the impact the issue has on the community and pair it with a local story to provide color. Your poison control center can help you do this.

Participating in Media Interviews

Media interviews allow you to tell your story and convince readers/listeners/viewers why they should care about your event and how the issue could impact them. It's also an opportunity to emphasize key poison prevention resources, such as the toll-free Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222, which connects callers to their local poison control center, and website address, www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov (also available in Spanish), where people can go to get more information. Your local poison control center can provide additional advice on what to say during an interview about services in your area.

How to Prepare for a Media Interview

Consider the following tips to help you prepare for a media interview:

- Consider your audience and their interests.
- Focus on just a few key messages that are critical to convey in the interview. Avoid using jargon, confusing terms, or acronyms.
- Practice. Anticipate what the reporter will ask you and rehearse your answers so they communicate your message in a clear and concise manner.

How to Prepare for a Media Interview

Whether your interview is in person or on the phone, engage reporters in a friendly manner and demonstrate your enthusiasm about the issue—if you don't seem interested, how can you expect them to be interested? Following are a few helpful tips:

- Demonstrate your expertise by offering background information about National Poison Prevention Week and poison prevention.
- Provide the reporter with evidence to support your statements. Do not worry if you are unable to answer a particular question. Instead, offer to get back to the reporter with the information after the interview, and follow through on that promise.
- Focus on making a local connection in the interview whenever possible. Local poisoning information is available through your local poison control center by calling the toll-free Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222.
- Repeat yourself. Repeat your talking points so the reporter walks away remembering the most important things in the interview. This is your interview—use it to get your message across to your community.
- A common technique to get your messages across is to summarize all of your key points at the end of the interview (e.g., “it’s important for your viewers to remember the following three things” or “to summarize, the important thing is...”).
- To personalize the gravity of poison prevention and emphasize the importance of poison control centers, share stories about real people who have received help from centers. Note: Be sure you do not violate the privacy of these people in telling their stories.

How to Emphasize the Key Points of National Poison Prevention Week

Consider the following speaking points to help you stay on track and convey essential information during your interview.

- More than 2 million poisonings are reported to poison control centers each year across the country. In the state of [State Name], [insert relevant local/regional poison information].
- Your local poison control center in [insert location] works 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year to respond to your needs in the event of a poison emergency.
- [Organization Name] is holding a [event] on [date/time] at [location] to educate people on the dangers of poisonings, how to prevent them, and what to do in the event of a poison emergency.
- This event is a part of the annual National Poison Prevention Week, which has been helping to raise awareness about poison prevention since 1962.
- To learn more about how to prevent a poisoning or respond should one occur, please visit the Poison Help website at www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov, where you can find useful information and locate your local poison control center.
- Remember, in the event of a poison emergency, contact your local poison control center through the toll-free Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222.

Developing Media Materials

Please see the Media Advisory and Press Release templates in this planner to help guide you in developing materials in conjunction with your poison control center to promote your National Poison Prevention Week event.