



# UPDATE

## POISON CONTROL PROGRAM

1-800-222-1222

[www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov)



### About HRSA

The Health Resources and Services Administration is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. HRSA is the primary Federal agency responsible for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. For more information about HRSA and its programs, visit [www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov).

### National Poison Prevention Week

## SPECIAL EDITION

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**National Poison Prevention Week is March 14-20, 2010**

In 1961, Congress established *National Poison Prevention Week* as a national observation during the third full week of March. The week is intended to highlight the dangers of poisonings for people of all ages and to promote community involvement in poisoning prevention on a local and national level. The observance is coordinated by the *National Poison Prevention Week Council*, a group of public and private organizations. The Council is committed to reducing unintentional poisonings, promoting poison prevention, and coordinating annual activities.

Each year in honor of *National Poison Prevention Week*, the Council conducts a nationwide poster contest supported by local Poison Centers to engage communities in helping to ensure the safety of children and adults. For more information about the Council and its poster contest, visit [www.poisonprevention.org](http://www.poisonprevention.org).

If you are interested in hosting or participating in a *National Poison Prevention Week* event, do two things: download HRSA's new [National Poison Prevention Week Planner](#) and, importantly, reach out to your local Poison Center to find out what they have planned and determine how you can work together. You can find your local Poison Center on the [Poison Help Web site](#).

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## Poison Centers: A Key Resource for *National Poison Prevention Week* Planning

For Poison Centers around the country, *National Poison Prevention Week* is a much-anticipated time that requires months of planning and preparation. And getting people's attention in today's world of scrolling news tickers, flashing banner ads, text messages, tweets, and other distractions requires a little creativity. Below are some examples of the activities of local Poison Centers during *National Poison Prevention Week*. Consult your [local Poison Center](#) for information on activities being planned in your area and to find out how you can help.

- In **West Virginia**, the winner of a children's poster contest will get to see his or her drawing featured on a billboard along a major interstate highway. That poster, along with second, third, and honorable mention winners, will be used in the production of additional educational materials throughout the coming year, according to Kimberly Fetty, the outreach coordinator at the West Virginia Poison Center.
- The **Rocky Mountain Poison Center** in Denver has collaborated with King Soopers/City Market Pharmacies since 2004 to distribute guides, magnets, and activity books through these pharmacies during *National Poison Prevention Week* and beyond. Public Education Coordinator Mary Hilko said the activities have gradually expanded to other pharmacies, and she hopes this year to include 200 Walgreens pharmacies in the effort. The Rocky Mountain Poison Center also works with Denver Public Libraries to distribute a "PoisonSmarts" newsletter during the week. "Basically, I try to take advantage of any and all opportunities that come my way," Hilko said.



**Katy Petros, age 9, of Morgantown, WV, poses with her 1st Place poster in billboard format on Interstate Highway 64. Petros won the WV Poison Center's poster contest.**

***"National Poison Prevention Week is an opportunity to increase awareness of the importance of poison safety and to reinforce that in a poison emergency or for poison prevention information, both health care professionals and the general public can call the Poison Center 24/7. It's that simple."***

Gail Banach, director of education, Upstate New York Poison Center

- Gail Banach, director of education at the **Upstate New York Poison Center**, said that in keeping with this year's theme of "Cleaning Out Medicine Cabinets," her center will collaborate with groups and agencies to host a prescription drug drop-off day during the third full week of March. With limited advertising, they anticipate as many as 300 pounds of

drugs being dropped off for an event. Additionally, the Poison Center cooperates with the New York State library system throughout their coverage area in sending out 3,300 poison safety bookmarks to 34 libraries.

- The **North Texas Poison Center** will again have a “Poison Jungle Safari” at a zoo in Tyler, TX. The Poison Center will set up tables around the zoo to educate parents and children about poisons, including plants, snake bites, and carbon monoxide. The children will get a stamp at each table, and at the end of the day be eligible for a drawing. Public Educator Michael Yudizky said the North Texas Poison Center got the idea from the West Texas Regional Poison Center, which also has run a successful zoo-based education program. “Kids love it, parents love it, it’s fun for us to do,” he said. “And the zoo loves it.”
- In **California**, the California Poison Control System devotes significant resources to media and public relations throughout the year, including during *National Poison Prevention Week*. Activities during the week include a multi-segment live remote interview about a poison topic with the most-watched morning show in the Los Angeles market. The System also coordinates Spanish-language media events and interviews. It also partners with organizations such as Safe Kids and county public health departments to e-mail a “Top 10 Tips” printable PDF flyer to more than 600 organizations and thousands of educators statewide.
- In **Arkansas**, Education Coordinator Charlie Stutts has hit the lecture circuit during past *National Poison Prevention Weeks*. He’s appeared on various local TV news shows, at public health fairs, and at preschool classrooms. Among the topics he likes to discuss are poison look-alikes and how to avoid them.

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## The Poison Help Campaign

[Poison Help](#) is a national campaign funded by HRSA to promote the 1-800-222-1222 Poison Help line. The campaign highlights the excellent work of the Nation’s Poison Centers and educates people about how to prevent poisonings and how to respond should one occur.

The national Poison Help Web site ([PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov)) provides tips and resources for parents, teachers, health professionals, and local businesses. This year, the campaign will support the efforts of Poison Centers and the *National Poison Prevention Week Council* by launching a revised [National Poison Prevention Week Planner](#) and brand new design and new features for the Poison Help Web site. Please keep an eye out for the new site!

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## Planning an Event for *National Poison Prevention Week*



Need ideas on what activities to have during *National Poison Prevention Week*? Not sure how to write media materials to promote them? Want additional resources and poisoning facts? HRSA’s newly updated [National Poison Prevention Week Planner](#) is a great place to start. As you review the Planner and begin thinking about planning activities for National Poison Prevention Week, contact your [local Poison Center](#) to find out what activities already are in progress and how you can get involved.

The updated [National Poison Prevention Week Planner](#) includes new materials that provide activity- and event-planning suggestions, media advice, template materials, and educational materials, including general poisoning facts. Some of the suggested activities and events include a poster contest, a poison first-aid class in conjunction with your Poison Center, a community health fair, and more.

In 2007, Poison Centers received more than 6,000 poison calls a day. Poison prevention should be promoted all year, starting with your efforts during *National Poison Prevention Week*. You can help highlight the importance of poison awareness by joining the nationwide effort to draw attention to the issue.

Poison Centers fielded more than 4 million calls in 2007 alone, so the need for poison prevention education remains high!

**"I am impressed with the Planner, and it will help me tremendously, not just in my own planning for *National Poison Prevention Week*, but in helping others in my state plan for it. The quality of the materials is high, and in particular, I like the use of the color green and the red phone receiver in the nameplate. Bravo!"**

Kim Fetty, Community Outreach Coordinator, West Virginia Poison Center

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## Poison by the Numbers

### When?

**1953:** Opening of the first U.S. Poison Center

**1958:** Founding of the American Association of Poison Control Centers

**1961:** Congressional establishment of National Poison Prevention Week

**2002:** Introduction of the toll-free national Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222

### What?

**60:** Number of U.S. Poison Centers

**4.2 million:** Number of calls taken by Poison Centers in 2007

**6,800:** Average number of calls per day in 2007

**1,239:** Number of poison-related deaths reported to Poison Centers in 2007

### Who?

**1.27 million:** Number of calls in which someone under age 5 may have been exposed to a poison in 2007

**34:** Number of poison-related deaths among children under age 6 in 2007

**508:** Number of people between ages 40 and 59 who died from a poisoning in 2007

### Why?

**1.6 million:** Number of calls to seek information in 2007

**2.4 million:** Number of calls seeking help for potential human exposure to poisons in 2007

**1.16 million:** Number of those calls in 1987

**309,431:** Number of calls regarding analgesics, or painkillers, in 2007

**15,769:** Number of carbon monoxide calls in 2007

**172,541:** Number of children under age 5 exposed to cosmetics or personal care products in 2007

**122,832:** Number of children under age 5 exposed to cleaning substances in 2007



This poster by Alexander Anderson, age 8, won Honorable Mention in the West Virginia Poison Center's 2009 Poison Prevention Poster Contest.

Source: National Poison Data System, 2007 Annual Report, American Association of Poison Control Centers

All statistics described above pertain to instances reported to Poison Centers.

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