



National  
**POISON PREVENTION WEEK**  
PLANNER



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

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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Check out the new downloadable *National Poison Prevention Week* planner below. In the planner, you will find ideas for events and activities, information about how to partner with your local poison center as you begin planning your activities, and strategies to promote your events through media and community outreach in conjunction with your poison center. **You can reach your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222 to find out how you can support existing efforts to celebrate *National Poison Prevention Week* in your community.**

Introduction—This is a 3-page PDF file that describes *National Poison Prevention Week*, how you can get involved by contacting your local poison center, and the role of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in promoting this event nationally.

### Event-Planning Materials

Tips for Successful Activity and Event Planning—This is a 4-page PDF file with tips for planning an event with suggested activities for specific target audiences. Before you begin planning your event, contact your local poison center through the toll-free Poison Help line to see what activities already are being planned in your area.

Snapshots of Past Events and Activities—This is a 2-page PDF document that illustrates several events that poison centers have implemented in previous years to increase community awareness about poisons, poison safety, and poison prevention.

### Publicity Materials

Promoting Your *National Poison Prevention Week* Events—This is a 3-page PDF document that provides information on how to promote your event, working in conjunction with your local poison center.

Media Advisory Template—This is a 2-page PDF document that provides a template for inviting media to a *National Poison Prevention Week* event. Check with your local poison center before distributing a media advisory.

Press Release Template—This is a 2-page PDF file that provides a template for collaborating with your local poison center to create and distribute a local press release to interest media in your activities.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to Distribute Radio Public Service Announcements—This is a 2-page PDF file that contains scripts that radio DJs can read on air about *National Poison Prevention Week*. Some poison centers may distribute their own radio scripts, so contact your local poison center first before distributing these.

Proclamation Guide—This is a 3-page PDF file that provides two sample proclamation templates. Many poison centers have established relationships with the offices of public officials in your community, so work with your poison center to see how you can help secure a proclamation to declare the third full week of March as *National Poison Prevention Week*.

[Back to Top](#)





National

# POISON PREVENTION WEEK PLANNER



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

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

## INTRODUCTION

### Welcome to *National Poison Prevention Week*

Thank you for joining the nationwide effort to help prevent accidental poisonings, a leading public health problem. Almost anything can be poisonous if used the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person, but help is available. Through the toll-free Poison Help line, **1-800-222-1222**, which connects callers to their local poison center, the nation's poison centers respond to more than 2 million poisoning exposures each year.

During *National Poison Prevention Week*, the third full week of March each year, do your part to educate the public about poisoning risks and what to do about them. The week is an opportunity 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.

Participating in *National Poison Prevention Week* is easy, and every activity—large or small—can make a difference. Throughout the country, poison centers conduct activities to raise awareness of the dangers of poisoning. **Poison centers are your first resource for advice and help in planning activities during that week—and they may have activities already under way that you can support, so it's important to find out first what's already planned.** Visit [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/poison-centers/find/index.html](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/poison-centers/find/index.html) or call **1-800-222-1222** to find the poison center serving your area.

### Getting Started: Working With Your Poison Center and Using This Planner

Consult your local poison center by calling **1-800-222-1222** before you begin planning your activities to see how you can work together. Then refer to the materials in this planner to prepare and promote any additional activities or events to support your poison center's activities. Two types of materials are included:

- Activity and event-planning suggestions that outline a range of activities large and small for you to work with your poison center to consider implementing in your community, along with tips and resources for conducting activities during *National Poison Prevention Week* and beyond.
- Media advice and template materials that can be customized to promote activities in conjunction with your local poison center; be sure to let local media know that your activities are part of a national effort, and coordinate your media outreach with your poison center's efforts.



### Joining Forces to Prevent Poisonings, One Step at a Time

After you have reached out to your local poison center, consider asking other organizations to take up the cause with you (your poison center may have relationships with other organizations that can help). Together with combined resources, you can cast a wider net with your *National Poison Prevention Week* activities.

Find additional groups by thinking about all types of community organizations that may have an interest in poisoning prevention: your chamber of commerce, city or county government, schools, utility companies, and church groups, for example.

When you invite groups to participate with you in *National Poison Prevention Week*, give each organization a clear role. Agree on the goals of your partnership from the start, and establish a group leader who will guide your activities and communicate regularly with all organizations to keep everyone involved. Every activity during *National Poison Prevention Week*—and year-round—is critical for educating people about poison prevention. Even with limited resources, everyone can participate. Post general facts about poisoning and poison center resources on your organization's Web site. Consider linking to the Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov), which is also available in Spanish at [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov). The site also offers other resources, such as the Poison Help interactive widget—an online tool about poison prevention that you can add to your Web site, personal blog, Facebook, or Twitter page.

### What is *National Poison Prevention Week*?

In 1961, Congress established *National Poison Prevention Week* as a national celebration each year during the third full week of March. The observance is sponsored by the *National Poison Prevention Week Council*, a group of public and private partners committed to reducing unintentional poisonings, promoting poison prevention, and coordinating annual activities to promote *National Poison Prevention Week*. For more information and to learn how Council members are observing this week, visit [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/what-can-you-do/national-poison-prevention-week/participating-in-national-poison-prevention-week/index.html](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/what-can-you-do/national-poison-prevention-week/participating-in-national-poison-prevention-week/index.html) and [www.poisonprevention.org](http://www.poisonprevention.org).

### What is Poison Help?

Poison Help is a national campaign funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to educate people about how to prevent a poisoning from occurring and how to respond should one occur. The Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov), provides resources for parents, teachers, health professionals, and local businesses. It can be used to help with poison prevention activities and provides information for you to locate and contact your local poison center. People can also contact their local poison center through the toll-free Poison Help line, **1-800-222-1222**, for educational materials, information, and assistance with a poisoning emergency in 161 languages.

HRSA is the primary Federal agency for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. HRSA provides national leadership, program resources, and services needed to improve access to culturally competent, quality health care. HRSA funds the toll-free Poison Help line, **1-800-222-1222**, and Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov).

### Poison Information

For additional poison information that you can distribute during *National Poison Prevention Week*, please visit the following pages on the Poison Help Web site:

- [Frequently Asked Questions About Poisonings](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/faqs/index.html) ([www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/faqs/index.html](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/faqs/index.html))
- [United States Poison Centers](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/poison-centers/index.html) ([www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/poison-centers/index.html](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/poison-centers/index.html))

[Back to Top](#)



National  
**POISON PREVENTION WEEK**  
PLANNER



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

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

## TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITY AND EVENT PLANNING

By hosting events in conjunction with your local poison center in observance of *National Poison Prevention Week*, you will help educate your community about poisoning prevention. **Contact your local poison center through the toll-free Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222, to find out what activities they are conducting and how you can partner with them.** Your local poison center can give you ideas and provide you with resources to support your own event. The following recommendations will also help you plan successful events.

### Coordinate With Other *National Poison Prevention Week* Activities

Contact your local poison center by calling **1-800-222-1222** to learn about other *National Poison Prevention Week* activities and how you can support these activities. In addition, here are some examples of other organizations you can collaborate with (your poison center may already have relationships with these types of organizations):

- Local radio and TV stations
- Community organizations, including religious entities, civic groups, fraternities and sororities, and recreation leagues and organizations
- Medical, emergency support, and public health groups
- Education-related organizations, including day care centers, libraries, colleges and universities, and parent-teacher associations
- Businesses, including baby product stores, toy stores, grocery stores, maternity stores, and drug stores/pharmacies

See the “Introduction” within this planner for tips on partnering with your poison center and other groups to extend the reach of your *National Poison Prevention Week* activities.

### Choosing an Audience and Activity/Event Type

Successful activities and events consider the needs of the community. For example, if your community is largely bilingual, prepare bilingual materials and have bilingual speakers. For Spanish-speaking audiences, refer people to the Spanish-language Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov). If your community has a large senior citizen population, avoid holding your event at night, and hold your event at a venue that is handicapped-accessible. To learn more about your community’s needs, contact your poison center.



Here are some ideas for ways you can reach people of various ages during *National Poison Prevention Week* and beyond.

### Children

Since leading causes of poison exposures among children under age 6 involve cosmetics, cleaning products, and medicines, an effective event might target those who provide care for children. Targeted audiences could include:

- School-aged children
- Parents and child care providers
- Teenagers/babysitters
- Grandparents/older adults
- Pediatricians and emergency service personnel

Consider reaching these audiences by directing your local PTA, Boy and Girl Scout troops, parenting classes, and babysitting classes to the Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov), for additional information on poisonings and poison prevention. Poison centers also have a variety of resources available for your use. If possible, enlist your poison center to speak at local organizations' meetings to explain common poisoning risks and what to do if a potential poisoning occurs.

### Preteens/Teens

Use of inhalants—household products that are sniffed to get high—among youth in this country is a growing concern, as is prescription drug abuse. An effective event might be to hold a school assembly with skits that focus on the harm and dangers involved with using inhalants and other drugs.

### Adults

Consider working with your poison center to partner with local businesses and organizations to provide resources on poisoning prevention to their employees, such as by hanging posters in common areas. Also, work with local pharmacies to distribute medication safety information.

### Older Adults

Older adults are more likely than others to die from poisonings due to medication errors. Working with your poison center, partner with local senior centers to hold programs that review medication safety. Useful tips include making a list of all medications being taken to share with physicians, ensuring that medications are kept locked up away from children, not sharing medications, and taking them as directed.

### Specific Ideas for Events and Activities

Tailor your *National Poison Prevention Week* activities to your needs and available resources. Any activity, large or small, can make a difference. If you and your poison center have limited resources, here are a few simple activities that do not require large amounts of time or funding:

- Post general facts about poisoning and poison center resources on your Web site, link to the Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov), and embed the Poison Help widget ([www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/what-can-you-do/badges-and-widgets/index.html](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/what-can-you-do/badges-and-widgets/index.html)) on your Web site to provide your community with additional information.
- Call your local radio stations and ask them to read the live-read public service announcements included in this planner during *National Poison Prevention Week*.
- Encourage your local radio stations to play the Poison Help radio jingles, available for download on the Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/resources/jingle/index.html](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov/resources/jingle/index.html).
- Hold a brown bag lunch at work to educate coworkers and your employer about potential workplace poisoning risks.

In addition, consider the following ideas:

#### **Hold a Local *National Poison Prevention Week* Poster Contest**

Many poison centers invite children in the community to create a poster that can be used to educate the public about poisoning. If budget allows, work with your poison center to host a reception or awards program to recognize participants and present prizes. Don't forget to invite the media to encourage coverage of the event. To broaden your resources, seek sponsors or donations from local businesses, especially those that you contract with for services.

You can also encourage people in your community to enter the *National Poison Prevention Week* poster contest held nationwide. For more suggestions and guidelines, visit [www.poisonprevention.org/poster.htm](http://www.poisonprevention.org/poster.htm).

#### **Host a Poison First-Aid Class**

Work with your local poison center to obtain teaching materials so you can coordinate a first-aid class focused on poisoning for your community and workplace.

#### **Partner With Your Local Poison Center to Coordinate a Tour**

Depending on the feasibility of doing so at your local poison center, consider holding a picnic outside of the facility followed by a small-group tour. Another idea is to collaborate with local schools to offer a tour of your local poison center as a field trip, if your poison center is equipped to offer tours.

#### **Conduct a Community Health Fair**

Invite your poison center, local health professionals, firefighters, police officers, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troop leaders, 4-H Club leaders, and others to set up booths about poison prevention.

### With Guidance From Your Poison Center, Create a Look-Alike Display

With the help of your poison center, create a look-alike display that shows a variety of potentially poisonous items that look almost identical to non-poisonous items. Examples can be found at the Missouri Regional Poison Center's Web site ([www.cardinalglennon.com/Pages/Missouri%20Regional%20Poison%20Center-Poison%20Look%20Alikes.aspx](http://www.cardinalglennon.com/Pages/Missouri%20Regional%20Poison%20Center-Poison%20Look%20Alikes.aspx)). Showcase the display (with permission) in local libraries, schools, and government buildings.

### Hold a Pharmaceutical Take-Back Program or Event

Unwanted and outdated pharmaceuticals pose serious safety and environmental threats, ranging from child poisonings and illegal use to contamination of our streams and drinking water. Work with your poison center and local law enforcement to coordinate a free and safe disposal of unwanted, unneeded, and expired medications. Controlled substances require special handling, and law enforcement must be involved.

## Planning Effective Events in Conjunction With Your Poison Center

- *Start your planning by contacting your poison center right away.* Based on your combined resources and manpower, decide how large your event can be and how many people you will need on hand to help. Together, hold a planning meeting to establish roles and responsibilities, organize material creation and distribution to attendees, select and book a venue based on the size of your event, outline your publicity and media outreach plans (see "Promoting Your National Poison Prevention Week Events"), and make other accommodations, such as how you will handle media requests or record the audience's comments, if needed.
- *Choose a location that easily accommodates members of the media and people with special needs.* Some possible venues for your event include your local poison center, police station, firehouse, hospital, health clinic, YMCA/YWCA, library, town hall, community center, church, synagogue, elementary school, college, or university.
- *If there will be a formal program, provide speakers, moderators, and other participants with an agenda for the event.* Ask that they arrive at least a half-hour early. If possible, designate a private space where they can prepare.
- *Be prepared for last-minute changes.* Secure a back-up venue, especially if your event is outdoors. Make sure to include alternative locations in your correspondence with attendees, speakers, moderators, and the media. Also secure a back-up speaker, in case your keynote speaker cancels unexpectedly.
- *Remind speakers to prepare speeches that will not exceed the allotted time frame.* If possible, obtain copies of their speeches beforehand to avoid repetition and to ensure that multiple perspectives on poison prevention are highlighted. Allowing time for audience interaction is important. It is also a good idea to allow a brief window of time for overlap or logistical changes.

[Back to Top](#)



National  
**POISON PREVENTION WEEK**  
PLANNER



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

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

## SNAPSHOTS OF PAST EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

For almost 50 years, *National Poison Prevention Week* has helped teach people about poisons, poison safety, and poison prevention. Through partnerships with public and private organizations, poison centers help communities understand why poisoning is a public health problem and that it can happen to anyone, at any time, and in any place.

Some examples of the types of events held in previous years include those profiled below. Contact your local poison center at **1-800-222-1222** to find out how you can work together to celebrate *National Poison Prevention Week* this year.

### The West Texas Regional Poison Center Holds Annual Poison Jungle Safari

**Summary of Activities:** In honor of *National Poison Prevention Week*, the West Texas Regional Poison Center hosts an annual family-friendly bilingual event at the El Paso Zoo. Poison prevention stations are set up throughout the zoo. Each station focuses on a specific category of poisons, such as medications, plants, bites and stings, illegal drugs, household products, environmental hazards, and lead. The first 500 children who complete the safari receive a free tee-shirt and their own individual poison prevention certificate of completion.

**Target Audience:** Located directly on the U.S.-Mexico border, the West Texas Regional Poison Center focuses on the English- and Spanish-speaking families that reside in El Paso, TX.

**Partners:** The El Paso Zoo partners with the poison center.

**Outcomes:** The Poison Jungle Safari has been held for at least 15 years. In one recent year, the event attracted more than 5,000 participants.

### The Georgia Poison Center Garners Governor's Proclamation and Distributes Poison Information

**Summary of Activities:** In one recent *National Poison Prevention Week* celebration, the Georgia Poison Center (GPC) secured a proclamation signed by the Governor declaring *National Poison Prevention Week* in Georgia. The poison center also distributed poison prevention materials at community facilities—libraries, a hospital, and the Georgia State Capitol—and conducted a statewide poster contest among elementary school students.

**Target Audience:** The Georgia Poison Center targeted all residents of Georgia.

**Partners:** Grady Health System, Emory University School of Medicine, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, the State of Georgia, and local community organizations partnered with the poison center.



**Outcomes:** More than 500 Georgia residents visited an informational display and material distribution center that was set up at a local hospital and at the Georgia State Capitol. Participants visited a look-alike display of poisonous items that resemble non-poisonous items and picked up brochures about medicine safety, pets and poisons, food poisoning, preventing poisonings in the home, bites and stings, and carbon monoxide. As many as 14 library branches distributed poison prevention informational sheets and gave out bookmarks with the poison center's phone number. Numerous posters were received for the poster contest, and six winners were selected and recognized at the GPC annual awards ceremony. Individuals who served as poison prevention instructors were also recognized at an awards ceremony for their commitment to poison prevention awareness. Additionally, press releases about poison prevention were published by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension of Hall County and by Emory University School of Medicine. The dangers of poisons and how to prevent poisonings were highlighted on local TV stations.

### Carolinas Poison Center Distributes Materials for Parents

**Summary of Activities:** The Carolinas Poison Center partnered with local English and Spanish agencies to promote and distribute free *Parent Packs* during a "Poison Pack Blitz" effort to promote *National Poison Prevention Week*. Designed to prevent poisonings and to familiarize North Carolinians with the toll-free Poison Help line, *Parent Packs* consisted of a poison safety brochure, a plant safety brochure, a phone sticker, and a magnet. The *Parent Packs*, available in English and Spanish, were promoted through online, radio, and newspaper outlets and were distributed by the poison center and Latino radio stations.

**Target Audience:** The Carolinas Poison Center targeted parents and caregivers.

**Partners:** Carolinas Medical Center, La Tremenda 1310 AM, and La Raza 102.3 partnered with the poison center.

**Outcome:** More than 200 *Parent Packs* were distributed during a recent *National Poison Prevention Week*.

### Northern Ohio Poison Control Center Hosts K-5 Poster Contest and Educational Curriculum

**Summary of Activities:** During a recent *National Poison Prevention Week*, the Northern Ohio Poison Control Center at Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital collaborated with local school districts to spread the message of poison safety to children in grades K through 5 with a poster contest. The poison center distributed age-appropriate lesson plans to schools with the aim of involving children in hands-on learning about poison prevention.

**Target Audience:** The target audience was children in grades K through 5 and their families and friends, with whom they were encouraged to share their newfound knowledge and take-home materials.

**Partners:** Ten schools submitted poster contest entries; participating schools had more than 400 students in the K through 5 grade range.

**Outcomes:** Children were able to express their creativity through learning. Each student was provided with the information needed to be poison-smart and engaged as an advocate in the poison smart message, and was given the confidence to spread the message to family members and friends.

[Back to Top](#)



National

# POISON PREVENTION WEEK PLANNER



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

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

## PROMOTING YOUR NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK EVENTS

As you work with your poison 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 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 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 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 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 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 center, and Web site address, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov) (also available in Spanish at [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov)), where people can go to get more information. Your local poison 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 Respond in an 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 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 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 centers each year across the country. In the state of **[State Name]**, **[insert relevant local/regional poison information]**.
- Your local poison 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 Web site at [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov), where you can find useful information and locate your local poison center.
- Remember, in the event of a poison emergency, contact your local poison 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 center to promote your *National Poison Prevention Week* event.

[Back to Top](#)



National

# POISON PREVENTION WEEK PLANNER



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

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

## MEDIA ADVISORY TEMPLATE

A **media advisory** is a one-page invitation for media to attend your event that is distributed up to a week in advance of the event. It tends to follow a “who, what, when, where” format. **Before you distribute a media advisory or plan an event for *National Poison Prevention Week*, check with your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222 to find out how you can coordinate with their efforts for the best results.** You may want to adapt the following media advisory language as needed for your event.

### Media Advisory

#### Date

**Contact:** [Name—Must be a person who is available to answer questions from the media]  
[Phone Number—Include cell phone if the person is not always available at the office]  
[E-mail Address]

**Sample Headline:** [Name of Organization] to Educate Public About Poison Prevention

[Event] being held to underscore the importance of poison prevention awareness during  
*National Poison Prevention Week*

[Introductory paragraph providing background on the reason for the event:] Each year, more than 2 million poisonings are reported to the nation’s poison centers, which can be reached through the toll-free Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222. As part of *National Poison Prevention Week*, a national event designated by Congress, [Name of Organization] will host [event] to remind the people of [State or Community] of the dangers of poisons and how to prevent unintentional poisonings among people of all ages.

**WHAT:** [Description of the event in a few short sentences]

**WHEN:** [Date and time of the event]

**WHERE:** [Name and address of the event location]  
[Web site of location, if applicable]

**WHO:** [Name and titles of those who are sponsoring the event and who will be speaking/  
featured at the event]

###



### About HRSA and the Poison Help Campaign

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which through the Poison Help campaign provides funding to improve poison centers and develops programs to support the enhancement and improvement of poison education, prevention, and treatment. HRSA funds the toll-free Poison Help line and Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov).

[Back to Top](#)





National  
**POISON PREVENTION WEEK**  
PLANNER



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

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

## PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

A **press release** is distributed to media prior to an event or when you are issuing new information. It provides reporters with details to cover your story.

**Before you distribute a press release for *National Poison Prevention Week*, check with your poison center at 1-800-222-1222 to find out what materials they may be planning to distribute to the media and how you can coordinate with their efforts for the best results.** As you consider what your press release should say, you may want to adapt the following language as needed for your event.

### Press Release

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

##### Date

**Contact:** [Name—Must be a person who is available to answer questions from the media]  
[Phone Number—Include cell phone if person is not always available at the office]  
[E-mail Address]

**Sample Headline:** [Name of Organization] Brings [Name of Community] Together in Commemoration of *National Poison Prevention Week*

[City, State], [Date]—Each year, [state or community statistic] poisonings are reported in [Name of State or Community]. As part of *National Poison Prevention Week*, [Name of Organization/Poison Center] is hosting [event] on [date] to discuss the dangers of potentially poisonous medicines and chemicals, and to outline preventative steps people can take to ensure their safety and that of their loved ones.

[Name of Organization] hopes that this event will bring people together in commemoration of *National Poison Prevention Week*, to ultimately mitigate the number of people who are involved in poisonings each year, especially poisonings in the home—the most commonly reported poisonings.

[Include details of the event—where and when it will be held, and who is in attendance.]



“By educating local residents about preventative steps in the home and in their lives, I believe we can make serious progress in keeping our loved ones safe,” said **[Name and Title of Prominent Local Official]**. “It is vital that people arm themselves with basic information on poison prevention in the home, such as keeping chemicals out of the reach of children and carefully reading the labels and dosages on all products. I applaud the efforts of **[Name of Sponsoring Organization(s)]**, which illustrate the importance of community involvement in important challenges like poison prevention.”

More than 2 million poisonings are reported each year to the Nation’s poison centers. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, approximately 90 percent of poisonings happen at home, and 51 percent of poisonings involve children under the age of 6. The majority of fatal poisonings occur among adults, especially older adults.

*National Poison Prevention Week* was established by the U.S. Congress in 1961 to focus national attention on the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them. To learn more about ways to keep people of all ages safe and help prevent poisonings, visit the Poison Help Web site at [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov) (or to view materials in Spanish, visit [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov)).

**In case of a poison emergency, contact your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.**

###

### **About HRSA and the Poison Help Campaign**

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which through the Poison Help campaign provides funding to improve poison centers and develops programs to support the enhancement and improvement of poison education, prevention, and treatment. HRSA funds the toll-free Poison Help line and Poison Help Web site, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov).

[Back to Top](#)





National  
**POISON PREVENTION WEEK**  
PLANNER



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

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

## HOW TO DISTRIBUTE RADIO PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Public Service Announcement (PSA) is an opportunity to receive free publicity through broadcast media. Radio disc jockeys allow for very little donated air time, so having a succinct and informative message for them to read on the air is crucial.

**Your local poison center may already have contacted radio stations in your area, so be sure to contact them first at 1-800-222-1222 to see how you can support existing outreach efforts.** Once you've determined the best way to proceed, contact your local radio stations to determine the deadline for receiving PSAs, letting them know you would like them to run during *National Poison Prevention Week* in the third full week of March. Ask who should receive the copy and in what format (e.g., fax, e-mail, or mail). Then customize the live-read radio PSA scripts below to promote *National Poison Prevention Week* in your local area.

Three scripts are provided below: a 15-second, 30-second, and 60-second version. Offer all three lengths to stations so they can decide when they have space to read them on the air. Remember to double-check the number of seconds for each PSA after you have customized it by reading it aloud before sending it to radio stations.

In addition, please visit [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov), also available in Spanish at [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov), to find existing prerecorded radio jingles (under the "Resources" section) that you can encourage your local radio stations to play. They can do so in addition to reading the live-read scripts below on the air.

**Contact: [Name—Must be a person who is available to answer questions from the media]**

**[Phone Number—Include cell phone if person is not always available at the office]**

**[E-mail Address]**

### ***National Poison Prevention Week* :15 Radio Public Service Announcement Script**

Stations, the following is a public service announcement:

Did you know that just about anything can be poisonous if used the wrong way? Learn more during *National Poison Prevention Week* the third full week of March by calling your local poison center through the toll-free Poison Help line at **1-800-222-1222**.



### **National Poison Prevention Week :30 Radio Public Service Announcement Script**

Stations, the following is a public service announcement:

To observe *National Poison Prevention Week*, **[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]** will provide **[OR HOST] [FILL IN THE SPECIFIC ACTIVITY, E.G., WILL PROVIDE FREE FIRST-AID TRAINING TO CHILDREN OVER 8 YEARS OLD AND ALL ADULTS]** on **[DATE]**, from **[TIME FRAME]** at **[NAME OF LOCATION AND ADDRESS]**.

For more information, contact **[LIST NAME AND ASSOCIATION OF CONTACT PERSON]** at **[CONTACT PERSON'S PHONE NUMBER]** or call your local poison center through the toll-free Poison Help line at **1-800-222-1222**.

### **National Poison Prevention Week :60 Radio Public Service Announcement Script**

Stations, the following is a public service announcement:

To observe *National Poison Prevention Week*, **[NAME OF ORGANIZATION]** will provide **[OR HOST] [FILL IN THE SPECIFIC ACTIVITY, E.G., WILL PROVIDE FREE FIRST-AID TRAINING TO CHILDREN OVER 8 YEARS OLD AND ALL ADULTS]** on **[DATE]**, from **[TIME FRAME]** at **[NAME OF LOCATION AND ADDRESS]**. The purpose of this event is to teach members of our community, such as **[FILL IN THE SPECIFIC AUDIENCE, E.G., CHILDREN OR SENIOR CITIZENS]**, about poisonings and promote community involvement in poisoning prevention. *National Poison Prevention Week* is held the third full week of March and aims to educate communities on the dangers of poisonings.

For more information, please contact **[LIST NAME AND ASSOCIATION OF CONTACT PERSON]** at **[CONTACT PERSON'S PHONE NUMBER]** or visit **[WEB SITE OF LOCAL POISON CENTER]**.

Anything can be poisonous if used the wrong way—even everyday household items. If you suspect a poisoning of a loved one, or if you have questions regarding poisons, call your local poison center through the toll-free Poison Help line at **1-800-222-1222**.

###

*National Poison Prevention Week* was established by the U.S. Congress in 1961 to focus national attention on the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them. To learn more about how to help prevent poisonings, visit [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov).

[Back to Top](#)



National  
**POISON PREVENTION WEEK**  
PLANNER



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

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

## PROCLAMATION GUIDE

Work with your poison center to secure a proclamation from your Governor, Mayor, member of Congress, or other local official for your *National Poison Prevention Week* event. An endorsement from a policymaker attracts attention from the community and the media, and often lends credibility to your efforts. **Your local poison center may already have contacted public officials in your area, so be sure to contact them first at 1-800-222-1222 to see how you can support existing outreach efforts.**

### Expanding the Reach of Your Proclamation

Here are a few ways to increase awareness of your proclamation after it has been endorsed:

#### Event Activity

Work with your poison center to hold an event where the public official actually signs the proclamation as part of your *National Poison Prevention Week* event.

#### Media Outreach

Coordinate with your poison center to distribute the proclamation to reporters who cover local, community, metro, city, education or health news. Include a press release about your event or a media advisory inviting the reporter to your event or proclamation signing. Please refer to the press release and media advisory templates included in this planning guide for more details.

After you distribute the proclamation and news release, follow up with the reporter to ensure that s/he received the materials. Reporters may be interested in interviewing the local official who issued the proclamation. Also offer reporters interviews with a poison center representative who can better describe the event and convey its significance to the local community.

#### Community Outreach

Display copies of the proclamation along with fliers about your event in common areas of local public places, such as libraries and government buildings. This will encourage participation in the event. Be sure to request permission from the places you wish to post the flier and proclamation, and find out whether your poison center already has similar plans in the works.



Following are two examples of National Poison Prevention Week proclamations. Most public officials accept proclamations written in a traditional format (see Sample 1 below, which uses phrases that begin with the word “Whereas,”), but some will also accept proclamations written in a more modern format (see Sample 2 below). Please adopt the template that best addresses your needs.

### Proclamation Guide: Sample Proclamation Template 1

**WHEREAS:** Congress designated the third full week in March to be *National Poison Prevention Week* in 1961, and since then this week has helped to raise national awareness of the dangers of potentially poisonous medicines, household chemicals, and other substances; and

**WHEREAS:** Each year, the Nation’s poison centers answer more than 4 million calls; and

**WHEREAS:** Approximately 90 percent of poisonings occur in people’s homes; and

**WHEREAS:** Over 50 percent of poisoning exposures involve children under age 6; and

**WHEREAS:** [Name of Organization(s) Hosting Event] have created [Name of Event] to highlight [Name of State or City]’s commitment to protecting its residents from potentially harmful poisonings; and

**WHEREAS:** The people of [Name of State or City] recognize the importance of coming together as a community to educate ourselves on poison prevention, and pledge our commitment to ensuring the safety of ourselves, our families, and our community;

**NOW, THEREFORE:** I, [Name], [Title of State or Community], hereby proclaim [Dates] to be *National Poison Prevention Week* in [State or Community] and encourage all to join in this observance.

\_\_\_\_\_Signature \_\_\_\_\_Date

[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]

### Proclamation Guide: Sample Proclamation Template 2

#### *National Poison Prevention Week*

#### A Proclamation by [Local Official’s Name and Title]

The third full week in March has been designated *National Poison Prevention Week*, focusing national attention on the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them. Established by the U.S. Congress in 1961, *National Poison Prevention Week* is commissioned by the *National Poison Prevention Week Council*. During this week, we come together as a community to educate ourselves on poison prevention, and pledge our commitment to ensuring the safety of our families, communities, and each other.

Each year, [community statistic] possible poisonings are reported to our region’s poison center. Across the United States, poison centers handle 1 call every 13 seconds and answer more than 4 million calls yearly. To prevent these poisonings from happening to you or a loved one, parents, teachers, nurses, and everyone in the community should take measures to ensure that unintentional poisonings are being prevented. A few ways to prevent a poisoning from happening include placing household chemicals out of the reach of children, storing items in their original containers to avoid confusion, and reading product labels, including the recommended dosages on all products. Older adults should take special precautions to understand medication safety.



To learn more about ways to help prevent poisoning, I encourage **[Name of State or Community]**'s citizens to visit the Poison Help Web site at [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov). In case of an emergency, individuals should contact their local poison center by calling the toll-free Poison Help line, **1-800-222-1222**. Poison prevention is the key to safer, healthier lives.

For the above reasons, I am asking the citizens of **[State or Community]** to join me in commemorating **[Dates]** as *National Poison Prevention Week*. I call upon all of **[State or Community]**'s citizens to observe this week by partnering with the **[Name of poison center]** and participating in appropriate activities to learn more about how to prevent poisonings.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration, the American Association of Poison Control Centers, the *National Poison Prevention Week* Council, and the **[Name of Organization]** welcome your participation in *National Poison Prevention Week*.

I, **[Name and title of local official]**, do hereby proclaim **[Dates]** as

***National Poison Prevention Week***

in **[State or Community]** and call upon our community to observe this week in support of poison prevention.

\_\_\_\_\_Signature \_\_\_\_\_Date

**[Insert City/State or Other Official Seal]**

[Back to Top](#)

