

CLINICAL UPDATE

A Publication Compiled by the Clinical Pharmacy Team of



Health Solutions

PHARMACY BENEFITS MANAGEMENT

NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK

MARCH 16-22, 2008

Over 2 million poisonings are reported each year to Poison Control Centers across the United States, and more than 90% of these occur within the home. The majority of non-fatal poisonings occur in children less than 6 years of age. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 30 children 5 years of age or younger die from unintentional poisonings each year. The goal of Poison Prevention Week is to decrease illness and injuries due to poisonings; help build safer communities; and decrease unnecessary harm for everyone.

To help prevent childhood poisonings, the following tips have been developed by The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP). Please pass these tips along to your patients.

- **Use original child-resistant containers.** Use child-resistant caps on medicines and other products and always keep all medications (prescription, nonprescription, and dietary supplements) in their original child-resistant containers.
- **Always call medicine "medicine".** Avoid calling medicine "candy" in order to get the child to take it.
- **Check your medicines periodically for expiration dates.** If a medication is not dated, consider it expired six months after the purchase date.
- **Avoid putting medicines in open trash containers.** This is especially important in the kitchen or bathroom because many adult medications can be deadly to small children.
- **Keep medications secure.** Keep all medicines (including OTC's, herbals, vitamins, and supplements) out of reach of children, or in a locked cabinet.

Make sure that all of your patients are aware of the national toll free number **1-800-222-1222** and that they have it posted by their telephone. This number routes them to their regional poison control center and is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

It is also important to remind patients dealing with children that if a child is poisoned, Poison Control should be called immediately; do not wait for the child to have any symptoms. In situations where the person is having seizures, not breathing, or is unresponsive – call 911 instead of Poison Control.

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The American Association of Poison Control Centers recommends the following tips for poisonings:

- **Swallowed poisons**

- Don't eat or drink anything
- Don't give syrup of ipecac.
- CALL POISON CONTROL

- **Inhaled poisons**

- Move to fresh air.
- CALL POISON CONTROL

- **Topical poisons**

- Remove contaminated clothing
- Rinse clothes with water for 10 minutes
- CALL POISON CONTROL

- **Optical poisons**

- Flush eye with lukewarm water for 15 minutes using a large cup held 2-4 inches from the eye.
- Do not force the eye open
- CALL POISON CONTROL

**Additional information and materials may be obtained at
<http://www.poisonprevention.org/>**