

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **North Dakota Observes Poison Prevention Week**

*State Health Department Urges North Dakotans to Prevent Unintentional Poisonings*

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) observes National Poison Prevention Week, March 20 through March 26, 2016 as an opportunity to remind parents, grandparents, caregivers and the public about the dangers of poisoning and to provide some basic prevention strategies to help children avoid a serious episode.

In 2015, there were 5,158 exposure calls made to the Minnesota Poison Center, the call center used in North Dakota. Of those 5,158 exposure calls, 53 percent were for children younger than age 6.

“Most poisonings are preventable,” said Mandy Slag, Injury Prevention Program Director for the NDDoH. “I encourage all adults to take preventive measures to protect children and themselves from unintentional poisonings. Many of the most dangerous poisons are things found in a home, such as antifreeze and window washer products, some medicines, and corrosive cleaners like toilet bowl cleaners.”

The Department of Health recommends the following poison-prevention measures:

- Keep all medicines, household chemicals and other poisonous substances away from children and away from food. Never leave them on the bedside stand, kitchen table or bathroom counter. Lock them up if possible. This is applicable for visitors as well.
- Warn children never to put medicines, chemicals, plants, or berries in their mouths unless an adult says it’s okay. At an early age, teach children that some pretty things, like vitamins and aspirin, can hurt them. Never call medicine “candy” to get a child to take it.
- Never store poison in food or beverage containers.
- Read all labels. Follow the instructions and measure carefully. Open medicines only when the lights are on so you can verify you are taking or administering the correct medicine. Only take medicines prescribed for you.

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- Unused medications can be disposed of through the North Dakota Attorney's General's Take Back Program. To find out more about the program visit: <http://www.ag.nd.gov/BCI/PrescriptionDrugAbuse.htm>
- Do not carry medicine in your purse or diaper bags; children like to play with them.
- Keep windows and/or doors open or run fans when using strong cleaning products. Never mix cleaning products together.
- Have the national poison control phone number and other emergency contacts readily available.

In case of a poisoning or a questionable episode:

- Call 9-1-1 if the person is unconscious, having difficulty breathing or not breathing.
- Do not give the person anything to eat or drink. Call the Poison Control Center at 800.222.1222 immediately.
- Bring the product or bottle to the phone so you can read the label to the staff at the Poison Control Center. Explain what was taken, how much was taken, when it was taken, and the age and weight of the person.
- Do not induce vomiting unless instructed to do so by the Poison Control Center or your physician.

For more information about poison prevention contact Mandy Slag, NDDoH, at 800.472.2286 (press 1) or visit our website at [www.ndpoison.org](http://www.ndpoison.org). Poison materials may also be ordered at [http://www.ndhealth.gov/injury/Injury\\_Prevention\\_Order\\_Form.aspx](http://www.ndhealth.gov/injury/Injury_Prevention_Order_Form.aspx)

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