



**Central
New York
Poison
Center**

1-800-222-1222

Poison Prevention

Newsletter

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 SUNY Upstate Medical University
University Hospital • 750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

Head Lice

Going back to school can mean new friends, teachers and experiences for sharing. Although, there are some things that are best not shared.

Head Lice is something that can affect anyone and often you can get it before you realize where it came from.

What are Lice and Nits?

Lice are reddish-brown wingless insects, nits are grayish-white, always oval shaped, and are glued at an angle to the side of the hair shaft.

How do people get Lice and Nits?

Anyone can get head lice... generally by head-to-head contact but also from sharing hats, brushes and headrests. Lice do not jump or fly.

Take these steps to protect your children.

1. Watch for signs of head lice, such as frequent head scratching.
2. Check all family members for lice and nits (lice eggs) at least once a week, only those infested should be treated.
3. Be sure not to confuse nits with **hair debris** such as bright irregularly shaped clumps of dandruff.

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What's in Your Backpack?

By Gail Banach, MSED Director of Education Central New York Poison Center

It's back to school season. Time for checklists and counter checklists, assuring that each task reaches completion. A backpack checklist might contain books, papers, pencils, sweater, lunch and..... **medication.**

Consider the number of children who are prescribed medication for a diagnosed condition, or taking over the counter medication to help with the symptoms of a cold, headache or other temporary ailment, some type of medication is often included in the cache that travels to school with our children.

As the Director of Education at a Regional Poison Control Center I would like to send a warning to parents, grandparents and other caregivers. Medication in backpacks and lunchboxes, mixed in with other personal belongings, can be dangerous not only to the child for whom the medication is intended but to schoolmates, as well.

Keep all medication sent to school in its original container. The information on the product is important and necessary in case of an emergency. Ask your pharmacist for additional containers for this purpose.

- Pills are often brightly colored, sugar coated, and can easily be mistaken for candy
- Liquids medications sometimes are sweet smelling can easily be mistaken for juice or soda
- Creams and ointments shouldn't be overlooked when considering the dangers of medication. The Poison Center suggests that you don't even include these items in your child's backpack.
- One serious backpack alert addresses inhalers, or "puffers", often used by the asthmatic patient. These units contain albuterol, which when used appropriately can literally be a life-saver but when abused or misused can cause an increased heart rate, which could be more than just frightening to a young student.

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Poison emergency?
Poison information?
Call Us!
Visit us on the web:
www.cnypoison.org

Poison Center Spotlight - *New Position at the Center*

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)/ Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

The CNY Poison Center has added a new position to the growing number of services it provides to its service area. Don Groff – BA/RN SPI, was recently named “Weapons of Mass Destruction / Emergency Coordinator.”

Don is a Registered Nurse with a degree in Biology. Having joined the Poison Center in April 2001, he is currently studying for his certification as a Specialist in Poison Information.

As a Major with the 174th Fighter Wing stationed at Hancock Field in Syracuse, he is responsible for Disaster Preparedness at the air base. This includes natural disasters, major accidents, and enemy attacks. Enemy attacks include the use of conventional, nuclear, chemical, biological, and radiological weapons.

In addition to his responsibilities as a specialist in poison information, Don will serve as a liaison with hospitals and community agencies such as fire, EMS, law enforcement, DOH, medical, and military agencies on WMD and emergency preparedness issues.

Don is also working on additions to our website, (www.cnypoison.org), to direct citizens and medical health care professionals to links with current information on WMD agents and treatments.



ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center offers safety tips for pet owners during West Nile mosquito spraying.

(Urbana, IL) August 14, 2002 – As pesticides are sprayed in an effort to control the mosquito population that carry the West Nile virus, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center urges pet owners to take precautions to limit their pets’ exposure to the pesticides.

West Nile virus is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito, and can infect people and animals. Although the vast majority of infections have been diagnosed in birds, the virus has been reported in horses, cats, bats, chipmunks, skunks, squirrels, and domestic rabbits. To help decrease the risk of West Nile Virus, many communities are taking steps to control the mosquito population through pesticide application. Although approved mosquito control pesticides pose low risks when used responsibly, the following tips are suggested to help limit pesticide exposure to companion animals.

Steps to Reduce Pet Exposure to Pesticides Used for Mosquito Control:

- Know when pesticide spraying will take place in your community. Contact your local health department to find out exact time and date of spraying.
- Keep pets indoors during times when pesticides are being sprayed. Elderly or debilitated

animals or those with preexisting health conditions such as heart disease or asthma may be more sensitive to pesticides and chemicals.

- Close windows and turn off window-unit air conditioners when spraying is taking place in the immediate area.
- Bring pet dishes, toys, and other items inside during spraying. If these items have been accidentally exposed to the spray, wash the items with soap and water and rinse before reintroducing the items to your pets.
- Horses, especially those with respiratory diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, should be kept in their stalls or in a lean-to during spraying.
- Cover water troughs and water buckets.
- Cover fishponds during spraying, as fish can be very sensitive to certain pesticides.
- If you suspect that your pet is experiencing difficulties, contact your veterinarian immediately.

For more poison prevention tips, please visit the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center’s website at www.apcc.asPCA.org.

Poison Prevention Safety Tips

Investigate and Separate

Although most accidents are unintentional, it is important to take time to poison proof your home. We offer brochures, training, and information on our website to help you to know what to look for and what measures to take to make your home safe from unintentional poisonings.

Start today by investigating and separating. Do you have products that are stored together that might be confusing or cause confusion? Look around your apartment or home and see it through the eyes of a child. If you have any doubt check it out.

For more tips and information visit our website at www.cnypoison.org or call the health educator at 315-464-5375 today!

Head Lice

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If you do find Lice or Nits, follow these steps:

1. Consult your pharmacist or physician before applying or using lice treatment pesticides. Remember, all lice-killing products are pesticides. Manual Removal is the safe alternative and a necessary component to any head lice treatment regimen.
2. Follow package directions carefully. Use the product over the sink, not in the tub or shower. Always keep the eyes covered.
3. **Remove all nits.** This assures total lice treatment. Separate hair in sections and remove all attached nits with the NPA's *LiceMeister*® comb, baby safety scissors, or your fingernails.
4. Wash bedding and recently worn clothing in hot water and dry in a hot dryer. Combs and brushes may be soaked in hot water (not boiling) for 10 minutes.
5. **Avoid lice sprays!** Vacuuming is the safest and best way to remove lice or fallen hairs with attached nits from upholstered furniture, rugs, stuffed animals and car seats.
6. **Never use Lice treatment products** when the person involved is pregnant, nursing, has allergies, asthma, epilepsy, has pre-existing medical conditions, or has lice or nits in the eyebrows or eyelashes. Never use a pesticide on or near the eyes.

For more information visit the website www.headlice.org

The Medicine Cabinet

The medicine cabinet is a place where we keep products to help make us feel better when we are sick. However those same products can make us sick if used improperly. Take a few minutes today to investigate and separate the products in your medicine cabinet.

Follow this easy to use checklist to make your medicine cabinet safer.

- Check all medications for expiration dates and properly dispose of outdated messages
- Separate medicines from health care products. Example: Sport Creams from Dental Care products
- Separate prescriptions from vitamins
- Separate children's products from adult products
- If it is a product that you only use occasionally, move it up and out of the reach of small children

Visit us on the Web at
www.cnypoison.org

Education Training Aids on Loan

Do you have a health fair coming up? Need to enhance your training and presentation display? Did you know that the "Look-alike Kit and Poison Quiz Board" are available from one of our point of service agencies? Yes it is true!

If you are teaching poison prevention in the community and want to add something special to your presentation call the Health Educator at 315-464-5375 and ask about videos, look-alike kits, poison quiz boards and more. It is a proven fact people remember more about presentations that involve seeing, hearing, and touching that just a straight lecture.

One of the most successful teaching tools we offer is the *Look-A-Like Kit*.

In the kit we demonstrate products that are common in most homes and how one product looks like another.

The difference being is one product is safe and the other could be potentially poisonous.

What's in Your Backpack?

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The results of medication in the wrong hands, or mouth, can be devastating. Take time to review each item in your child's backpack the following suggestions will help keep your student healthy.

- Find out exactly what the school's policy is on bringing and administering medication to a student. Most schools do have one
- Take the time to talk directly to your child's teacher and the school nurse about the medication your child will be taking so that both will be on the look-out for any symptoms or unusual behavior that your child may exhibit. (e.g. Cold and cough preparations often contain alcohol and can cause excitability or conversely, drowsiness in a child.)
- Keep the medication in the original container or ask the pharmacist for a dual pill vial to store only the amount necessary for school but containing all the information on the original vial, which can be kept at home.

- Present the teacher/nurse with written information containing the name of your child, the name of the medication and detailed instructions so that there is no misunderstanding. No one means to make a mistake. Take every precaution to prevent an accident from happening.
- Include the number of the Poison Control Center in the information you send to school. Naturally, Poison Center Specialists cannot address your child's dosage, as prescribed by the doctor, but we can act as a resource, if necessary. (The poison center will gladly send you a telephone sticker, just call 1-800-222-1222)

Accidents are not supposed to happen, but they do. Keep your child as safe as possible by taking the necessary precautions to reduce the risk of poisoning. Most importantly please remember, for poison emergencies or for poison prevention information you can call your local Poison Control Center 365 days per year, 24 hours per day at 1-800-222-1222.

Look what's coming in our next issue

- Safety Tips for the Holidays
- Allergies