



Poison Prevention

Newsletter

June 2011

UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY • 750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

Poison Center Welcomes Educator to the Staff

The Upstate New York Poison Center welcomes Mary Beth Dreyer as the Public Health Educator in the western region of our coverage area. Dreyer has a Master's Degree in Public Health and 15 years of experience in the field of public health education. Among her many contributions to the field of public health she is credited with developing and expanding cooperative partnerships in the western NY area and looks forward to working with the Upstate Center to develop new partnerships with the dedicated people working in the field of human service in her region.

As Dreyer expressed, "Never did I think the phrase 'when one door closes, another one opens' would ring so true!" With the unfortunate closing of the Western NY Poison Center at Women and Children's Hospital in Buffalo, NY, Dreyer was soon hired by the Upstate New York Poison Center to continue in her work as a public health educator. "Working alongside the education team at the Upstate New York Poison Center has already proven to be a valuable experience," said Dreyer. As the western region's public health educator, one of my charges is to prevent unintentional poisonings from occurring. My goal is to enhance outreach efforts by developing partnerships to expand the circle of influence, making more residents in western NY aware of the number for the poison center and of the services and resources of the Upstate New York Poison Center."

Vacation Safety

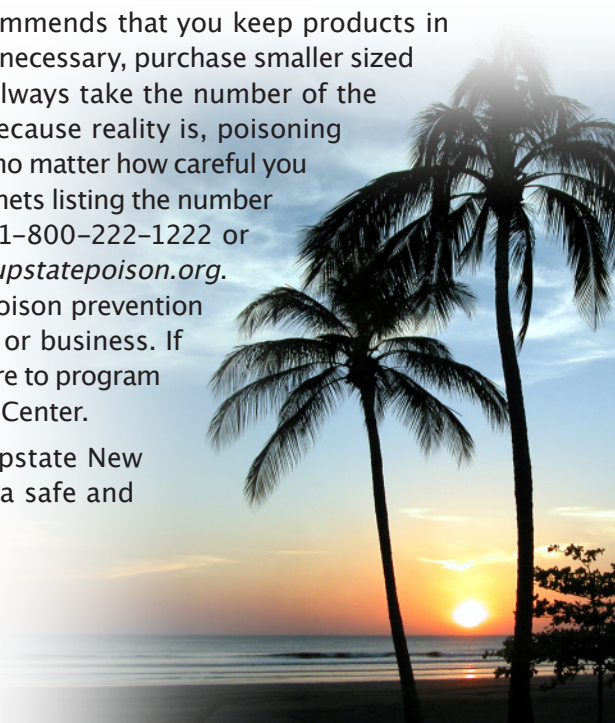
Often times, when packing for vacation, travelers try to save space by taking items out of their original containers and combining different things together. Unfortunately, one space saving technique may involve medication. Generally, when medications are combined into one container, the container of newly mixed pills is not properly marked and worse, important safety information is left at home. Unfortunately the "space solution" can lead to an unintentional poison exposure.

Prescription and over-the-counter medication (OTCs) containers list key information including medication name, strength, dosage amount and special instructions. It is a good practice to keep all medications in their original containers and out of the reach of children, especially important if visiting the home of a friend or relative with young children. You might also consider using zip-lock bags to keep prescription medications separate from OTC medicines. Or put each family member's medication in a separate zip-lock bag with his/her name of it to reduce confusion.

When staying at someone's home on vacation, please note that non-food products stored with similar-looking food products often results in a call to the Poison Center. A pine based liquid cleaning product can look like apple juice or other tasty beverage. Cleaning powders have been mistaken for baking products. Tubes of medicine have been mistaken for toothpaste when placed in the same travel container. So be on the lookout for "look-alikes".

The Poison Center recommends that you keep products in their original containers. If necessary, purchase smaller sized products just for travel. Always take the number of the Poison Center with you, because reality is, poisoning accidents may still happen no matter how careful you are. To get stickers or magnets listing the number of the Poison Center, call 1-800-222-1222 or visit our website at www.upstatepoison.org. We will be happy to mail poison prevention information to your home or business. If you have a cell phone be sure to program the number for the Poison Center.

From the staff at the Upstate New York Poison Center, have a safe and healthy summer.



Do You Know What Dangers to Look Out For During the Summer Months?

Food Safety

Eating food that has been contaminated by bacteria, viruses, parasites or toxins during the processing, handling, cooking or storage stage causes food poisoning. The Upstate New York Poison Center reminds our readers that food poisoning most often occurs during the summer months due to the higher temperatures that can quickly cause food to spoil.

The effects of the food poisoning are affected by your age and your general health. The signs and symptoms often include one or more of the following: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, fever and fatigue. The symptoms can start right after exposure or may begin days later and can last up to 10 days.

Seek medical help as soon as you can if you experience extreme symptoms such as: vomiting blood, if you are unable to keep liquids down for 24 hours, extreme pain or stomach cramping, dehydration or a temperature higher than 101.5°F.

If you think that you or someone you know may have food poisoning you can call the Poison Center or call your

local health department. You might not be the only one with symptoms and your report might help the health department identify a potential outbreak.

The best way to prevent food poisoning in the home is to follow tips for food preparation, handling, and storage. *FoodSafety.gov* of the USDA suggests four simple steps:

- **Clean** – wash hands and surfaces
- **Separate** – don't put cooked foods on surfaces or use utensils you used for raw foods
- **Cook** – to the proper temperature
- **Chill** – refrigerate as soon as you can. Rotate buffet food often to prevent food poisoning especially in the hot weather.

Sources: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/foodborne_illness_peaks_in_summer/index.asp

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/basics/index.html>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001652.htm>

Chemical Safety

Summer is a time to enjoy the outside. Lawns, gardens and pools are just a few of the areas where you might find chemicals that could harm you or your family. Lawns, flowers and plants are treated with chemicals to make them greener and to rid them of unwanted weeds and insects. Chemicals are added to pools to eliminate algae and bacteria. When handled properly, chemicals can enhance the beauty and safety in and around your home. If used carelessly you could be faced with a poisoning. Here are some tips for safe chemical use and storage:

Usage

- Read the labels and directions and follow usage instructions carefully.
- Always wash hands before and after handling chemicals.
- **Never use metallic utensils** – use plastic, glass, china or enamelware utensils and buckets only and be sure they are clean and dry.
- Keep all chemicals out of the reach of children.
- Never mix chemicals together. Use a clean scoop for each chemical, and never combine material from "old" and "new" containers.
- Never reuse old chemical containers.
- Carefully clean up any spilled chemicals with large amounts of water to dilute and wash away the chemicals.
- Use protective devices for breathing, handling for and eye protection.

- Promptly wash off any residue that gets on your skin.
- If you have any questions regarding safe handling, storage or use of pool chemicals, contact the manufacturer.

Storage

- Keep the original lids on all chemical containers and make sure the lids are closed tightly when not in use.
- Do not stack different chemicals on top of one another. They may leak.
- Do not store your pool chemicals with other flammable items.

If you even think someone has been exposed to chemicals call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

Sources: <http://poolandpatio.about.com/od/maintainingyourpool/tp/PoolChemDonts.htm>, <http://www.tps.com.au/pools/safety.htm>

National Prescription Drug Take Back Event

According to SAMHSA's 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the rate of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. is alarmingly high. More Americans currently abuse prescription drugs than the number of those using cocaine, hallucinogens, and heroin combined. Teens who abuse prescription drugs often obtain them from family, friends, and from the home medicine cabinet.

In April 2011, the Upstate New York State Poison Center took part in the DEA sponsored National Prescription Drug Take Back Event in an effort to keep medication out of the hands of abusers (and out of our drinking water as well). The DEA's Take-Back events are part of the White House's prescription drug abuse prevention strategy, ridding America's medicine cabinets of unused/expired drugs. Current plans include 2 DEA sponsored Drug Take Back Events annually, one in the spring and one in the fall.

At the April 2011 event nationally, more than 376,593 pounds (188 tons) of medications were collected and incinerated. Upstate New York State residents dropped off close to 10 tons of medication at the 40 sites throughout the upstate area. The Upstate New York Poison Center hosted three sites in Onondaga County in collaboration with Walgreens Pharmacies and distributed poison safety literature at sites throughout the western region of the state.

If you missed the Take Back Event and have medication you'd like to dispose of you could store them safely until the next DEA sponsored event in the fall.

However, you may choose to follow these simple steps for safe disposal:

- Take your drugs out of original containers and mix with an undesirable substance such as kitty litter or coffee grounds
- Put mixture into a disposable container with a lid, or into a sealable bag
- Conceal or remove any personal information on empty containers
- Place sealed container with mixture and the empty drug containers in the trash
- **NEVER FLUSH YOUR MEDICATION AS IT POLLUTES OUR WATER!**

Got Drugs?
Turn in your unused or expired medication for safe disposal

Visit www.dea.gov or call 800-882-9539 for a collection site near you.

dispose
unused
Rx

For more information, please visit www.dea.gov





Dear Reader,

HELP! We need your input!!!

Since 1993 the Upstate New York Poison Center has sent our quarterly newsletter to key members of the communities we serve. Our purpose has been to keep our readers informed of the latest poisoning trends and important poison safety issues. We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter as much as we have enjoyed providing it to you.

With budget cuts, including the closing of 3 New York Poison Centers, it is time to reassess some of our operating procedures. Today, I am writing to ask for your input in determining your interest in our newsletter and to discover what you like and don't like about it so we can make any necessary changes. If you are still interested in receiving the Upstate New York Poison Center newsletter, we want to know your preferred format, whether email or mail. (Could you consider an email format to help us reduce costs and yet still get the message of poison safety out to your clients/patients/customers? Let us know!)

We are hoping you are willing to provide this crucial information! To help, PLEASE complete the newsletter survey contained on the following pages of this newsletter so we can continue to provide you life saving information.

For your convenience, you may return the completed survey to us in one of 3 ways.

1. Remove the survey from the newsletter on the perforated line and send the completed survey to us by:

Mail: Poison Center 750 E. Adams St, Syracuse, NY 13210

OR

Fax: 315-464-7077 (*Attention: Gail*)
(*please complete AND SEND both sides of the survey*)

OR

2. Take the survey online. Go to ***www.upstatepoison.org*** and look for signage directing you to the newsletter survey.

Thank you! We appreciate your continued support of the Upstate NY Poison Center!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail P. Banach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gail Banach

Director of Public Education and Communications



**Thanks for your continued support of the
Upstate New York Poison Center!**

Please respond to each question below.

Return completed survey by mail, fax or online.

(See directions on previous page)

ALL RESPONSES ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO US!!!!

- 1. I generally read the Upstate New York Poison Center newsletter. YES NO
- 2. I generally enjoy reading the newsletter YES NO
- 3. I generally find the information relevant to my clients/patients YES NO
- 4. I generally share the information with my clients/patients YES NO
- 5. If you responded YES to question #4, please tell us how you share the information:

Check off your response(s):

GENERALLY:

- a. Information from the newsletter is verbally conveyed to our customers/patients, etc
- b. Information is inserted into another newsletter
- c. Information is used to develop a handout or a post for others (including website)
- d. The one copy sent to me is made available to customers/patients, etc
- e. The entire newsletter is copied and made available to customers/patients, etc
- f. Other: _____

5. Tell us what you like the most about the newsletter:

6. Tell us if there is anything you don't like about the newsletter:

Continued on next page



7. Tell us if there is something you would like to see included in the newsletter:

8. In what format could you receive future Poison Center newsletters and still realistically continue to get the message of poison safety out to your clients/patients?

- a. PRINTED COPY (via mail)
- b. ELECTRONIC COPY (sent quarterly to the email address you provide us)
- c. I prefer NOT to receive the newsletter

If so, tell us why NOT?

If so, be sure to give us your mailing address for deletion from our mailing list:

9. Please share your email address (*in case cost prohibits us from printing and mailing the newsletter we want to be sure we have your email address*):

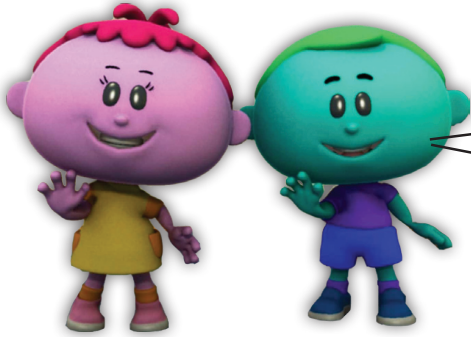
10. Please provide any additional comments you feel will help us improve our newsletter:

We thank you for taking time to provide your input!

The Poison Center Education Team

Mellie and Zipper recommend:

POISON SAFETY FOR YOUR HOME



Did you know that "good" products used the wrong way can be poisonous?
STOP! ASK FIRST!

STEP 1

Listed below are some poisonous items you might find in your home. In which room would you find each of these? Mark the room number on the line next to each item.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| _____ Vitamins | _____ Antifreeze | _____ Shampoo |
| _____ Dish Soap | _____ Nail Polish and | _____ Flowers |
| _____ Mouse Bait | _____ Remover | _____ Motor Oil |
| _____ Mothballs | _____ Alcoholic | _____ Plants |
| _____ Ant Traps | _____ Beverages | _____ Fertilizer |
| _____ Toothpaste | _____ Medicine | _____ Glue |
| _____ Peroxide | _____ Cigarettes | |
| _____ Oven Cleaner | _____ Deodorant | |
| _____ Pesticides | _____ Powder | |
| _____ Laundry Soap | _____ Furniture Polish | |
| _____ Windshied | _____ Bleach | |
| _____ Washer Fluid | _____ Gasoline | |
| _____ Perfume, Cologne, Aftershave | _____ Cosmetics | |
| | _____ Rubbing Alcohol | |



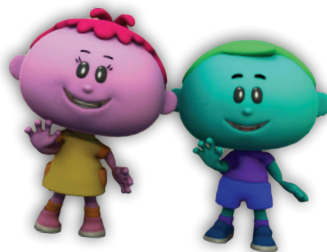
Now that you have found the poisons in your home, be poison safe!

STEP 2

Check the box below when you can say the statement is true.

In my house, we:

- Put all poisons out of reach
- Use safety tops
- Make sure all tops are tightly closed
- Use safety locks
- Make sure all products are in their original containers
- Know where to find the phone number of the Poison Center



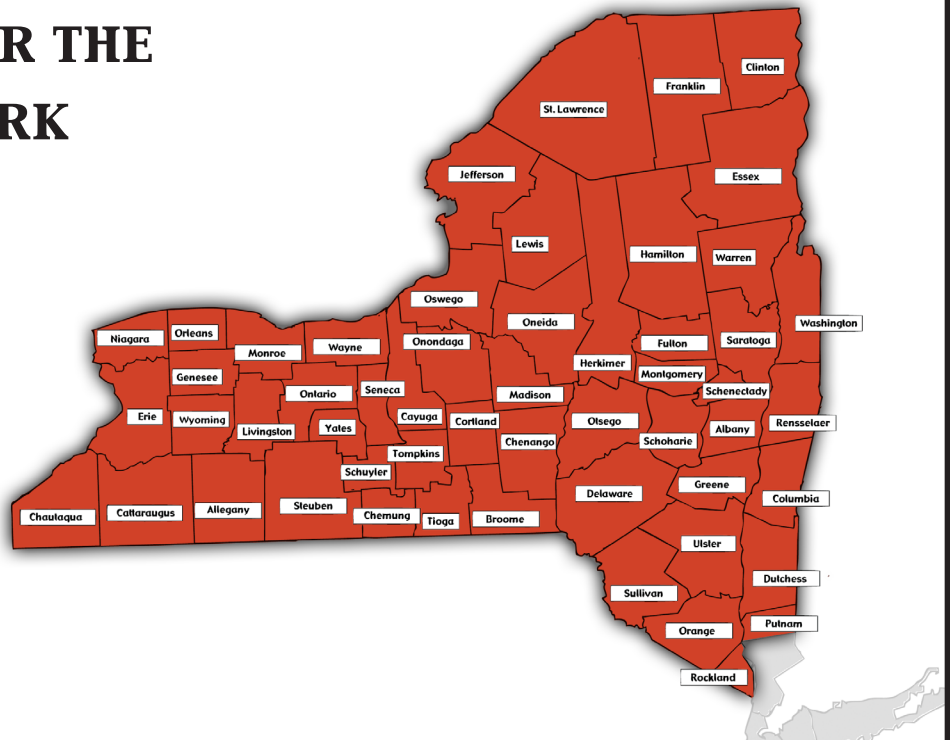
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SERVICE AREA FOR THE UPSTATE NEW YORK POISON CENTER



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Unintentional Poisoning Can Happen To You...At Any Age!

To receive your FREE telephone stickers, magnets, and information brochures, dial 1-800-222-1222 ask for the Health Educator at The Upstate New York Poison Center.