

Safe Kids Says Use Medication Right and Out of Sight

Safe Kids California reminds parents that March 16-22 is National Poison Prevention Week

Sacramento, CA — It is natural for children to explore their surroundings – unless they're getting under the kitchen sink or into the medicine cabinet where hazardous chemicals and medicines are kept. As National Poison Prevention Week (March 16-22) approaches, Safe Kids California reminds parents to make sure they store hazardous materials – including medication and even vitamins – out of their children's reach and in their original containers.

Each year, unintentional poisoning is the cause of death for approximately 100 children ages 14 and under. Poison control centers in the United States receive 1.2 million calls as a result of accidental poisoning of children ages 5 and under. In California over 90 percent of these exposures occur in the home, mainly in the kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. More than half involve non-pharmaceutical products such as cosmetics, cleansers, personal care products, plants, pesticides, art supplies, alcohol and toys.

"Based on cases reported to poison control centers, half of all poison-related deaths among children ages 5 and under involve medicine," said Katie Smith, coordinator of Safe Kids California. "Children have faster metabolisms than adults and anything they ingest can be absorbed into the bloodstream very quickly."

National Poison Prevention Week is a week nationally designated by Congress since 1961 to highlight the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them. Child-resistant packaging is credited with saving hundreds of children's lives. Still, there is no substitute for active supervision and childproofing.

Safe Kids California advises parents and caregivers to program the toll-free poison control number: **1-800-222-1222** into their cell and home phones to quickly connect to a poison control center from anywhere in the US. More than 90% of poisoning events can be handled over the phone!

"If a child is choking, having trouble breathing or having a seizure, call 911 instead" said Smith. "Follow the 911 operator's instructions. Do **not** induce vomiting or give the child any fluid or medication unless directed."

Safe Kids California offers these additional tips:

- Always store medicines and vitamins up and away in a locked location, and out of sight of children.
- Never give adult medications to children; children imitate adults, so take medicine out of view of children.
- Never call medication "candy" or tell children it tastes like candy.
- Always use the dosing device packaged with the medications, never use a household utensil.
- Remind babysitters and visitors to keep purses and bags up and away; make-up and many other items in women's purses can be toxic to children.

For more information about poison prevention, visit www.safekidscalifornia.org and/or www.safekids.org.

Safe Kids California works to prevent unintentional childhood injury, the leading cause of death and disability to children ages 1 to 14. Safe Kids California is the lead agency of 19 Safe Kids coalitions across the state comprising health professionals, educators, law enforcement, child and family agencies, and local business leaders. All are members of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing unintentional injury. Safe Kids California is led by the Child Abuse Prevention Center of Sacramento.

Look-alike examples: Kids can't tell the difference

