

## **Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency**

**March 23, 2012**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Poison Prevention is a Must!**

Never has poison prevention been more important than it is today! Poisoning now surpasses motor vehicle accidents as the number one cause of injury deaths for the first time in decades. Ninety percent of poisoning deaths are caused by drugs, including an increasing proportion of prescription painkillers. New and emerging hazards such as: pest control products and button batteries have also increased the risk of poisonings at home. The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency wants to remind you to be prepared by following three simple rules:

- (1) Keep medicines and household chemicals locked up, out of reach, and out of sight of young children at all times
- (2) Use child-resistant packaging because it saves lives
- (3) Call **(800) 222-1222** to get immediate treatment advice for poison emergencies.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an average of 87 people die every day from unintentional poisoning. Steve Todd, Health Officer at the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, states "Many of the poisonings reported are happening to children under the age of 5 because children are

growing, developing and constantly exploring their environment. Unfortunately what children see and can reach usually end up in their mouth. As children's mobility increases, they can reach medicines and household chemicals wherever they may be stored. This is why it is so important to store hazardous products in places where children can not reach them or in locked cabinets. And always use products that have child-resistant packaging."

"Having the poison control centers telephone number on hand is one of the most important things you can do to be prepared incase a poisoning happens." Health Officer Steve Todd added "Everyone should have the poison control number, **1-800-222-1222**, programmed into their cell phone. Poison works fast, so the faster you get help, the less of a chance you will have of getting a severe injury."

If you think your child may have come in contact with a hazardous product such as a medicine or a chemical, remain calm. Call the poison control center immediately. Be prepared to give the facts and have the label of the product. The label provides important information. Tell the expert:

- The victims age
- The victims weight
- Existing health conditions or problems
- The substance involved and how the person was exposed
- Any first aid that may have been given
- If the person vomited
- Your location and how long it would take to get to a hospital

Children are not the only ones susceptible to poisonings. Accidental poisonings can happen in adults as well. Elderly adults who cannot read labels or are confused by their instructions are also at risk. Intentional prescription medication abuse such as mixing medication with alcohol is another concern. Adults can take the following steps to decrease the risk of poisoning:

- Turn on the light at night and put on your glasses to read the label when you need to take a medication.
- Always read the label and follow instructions when taking medications. If any questions arise, consult your physician.
- Never mix medicines and alcohol, and never take more than the prescribed amount.
- Never “borrow” a friend’s medicine or take old medicines.
- Tell your doctor what other medications you are taking so you can avoid adverse drug interactions.

. Remember to keep all hazardous products out of children’s reach and locked away, use products with child-resistant packaging when available, always follow medication instructions and never mix medication with alcohol. For more information on poison control and prevention, visit the local poison control centers website at <http://www.childrensdmc.org/PoisonControl>. For more health and safety tips, visit [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org).

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