



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

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"Your Local  
Health Department"

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **The Best Treatment for Poisoning is Prevention!**

**Coldwater, MI.** March 19-25, 2017 is the 56th observance of National Poison Prevention Week as established by the United States Congress. The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency wants you to know that poison prevention is everyone's responsibility and it only takes a few minutes to safely store potentially hazardous products.

Poison Prevention is an issue. Annually, the Michigan's Regional Poison Control Center (MRPCC) at Children's Hospital of Michigan receives approximately 66,000 calls involving individuals exposed to poisons or hazardous substances. Over 40,000 of these poisoning exposure calls involve children under the age of 19 years. Between 2012 and 2014, the State of Michigan reported that 1,250 individuals died from unintentional injuries related to poisoning. Of those, 13 lived in Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph Counties.

To help inform parents of how to protect their children from unintentional injuries like poisonings, the health department convened the Safe Kids Coalition of Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph Counties. "Poisonings are completely preventable; it is up to all adults to keep children from harmful exposure to medications and chemicals around the home," said Mary Boyer Proctor, Safe Kids Coalition Coordinator at the health department. She reminds parents and teachers to "Always keep the Poison Help Line visibly posted in your home or classroom in case of emergency, 1-800-222-1222."

While many exposures are treatable, they can also be fatal. It is important to know how to prevent poisoning and what to do in case you or your children consume a potentially

dangerous product. The tri-county health department recommends the following tips for poison prevention:

- Install safety latches on cabinets and drawers;
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and chemicals out of site and reach of children;
- Try to purchase products with child-proof packaging when available;
- Keep products in their original packaging, do not store them in food containers; and
- Always read product labels and follow directions exactly.

The MRPCC provides emergency telephone treatment advice, referral assistance, and information to manage exposures to poisonous and hazardous substances. Certified Specialists in Poison Information and medical or clinical toxicologists are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to manage cases. The service is provided via a toll-free telephone number to every community throughout Michigan, including under-served, low income and indigent populations. According to MRPCC, for those that used the hotline, the center reports that over 79 percent of the unintentional exposure calls in children under age 19 were handled in the home so the children did not have to use an emergency department or need a 911 call and response.

To learn more about poison prevention, visit the health department's website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org) and click on the Health Promotion and Education tab at the top. Or visit the Safe Kids website at [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org). To learn more about how to protect your children's health, like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/bhsjwic>.

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