



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONTACT: Shelley L. Walker
615.741.3111 (office)
615.804.9972 (cell)

TENNESSEANS WARNED OF HOME POISONING RISKS

Poison Prevention Week is March 16-22

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - The Tennessee Department of Health is working to educate Tennesseans about the dangers of death and injury from poisoning, as part of the national observance of Poison Prevention Week, March 16-22, 2009. Poisoning is the third leading cause of injury in Tennessee.

“Education is the key to poison prevention,” said Health Commissioner Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN. “Poisonings are preventable, and we urge all Tennesseans to learn more about the many substances in their homes and workplaces that could pose a hazard and how to use these items safely.”

According to the Tennessee Poison Center, there were 49,151 poison exposures in the state in 2008. Approximately 90 percent of those exposures, more than 36,000 cases, occurred in the home. Nearly 29,900 of the total poison exposures involved children under the age of 6. Nationally, Poison Control Centers across the United States reported more than 2.4 million poison exposures in the past year, with more than one million involving children under age 6.

“Many cases of poisoning occur when people mix or misuse medications such as combining prescription and over-the-counter medicine,” said Rose Boyd, coordinator of the TDOH Injury Prevention and Control Program. “It’s important to provide people with education aimed at preventing poisonings in the home, such as carefully reading labels and dosages on all products, and keeping chemicals and medicines out of the reach of children.”

Poisoning prevention will be the focus of the TDOH Injury Prevention Symposium, to be held in Nashville on April 6, 2009. Topics include childhood poisoning, abuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs, medication errors and poison prevention education resources. Displays will include a mock methamphetamine lab and equipment used to decontaminate a meth lab, and common household “look-alike” products that may cause poisoning. This event is open to the public, and limited space is available. There is no cost to attend. For more information on the symposium, contact Rose Boyd at 615-741-2213, or Rose.Boyd@state.tn.us.

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**CORDELL HULL BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR
425 FIFTH AVENUE NORTH
NASHVILLE, TN 37243
WWW.TENNESSEE.GOV/HEALTH**

The Tennessee Poison Center is located on the campus of Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, and helps more than 127,000 callers from across the state every year. TPC operates Poison Help, the statewide medical telephone hotline. The number is 1-800-222-1222.

To learn more about poison prevention, visit <http://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/>.

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