

California Poison Control System Launches the First-Ever Free, Bilingual Mobile Health Service for Poison Prevention

National Poison Prevention Week is March 14 – 21

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As National Poison Prevention Week begins, the California Poison Control System announces ground-breaking new programs, including a free text messaging service, Facebook quizzes and e-cards to provide essential tips, news and information on poisoning, the second leading cause of childhood injury in the U.S. With more than two million poisonings reported each year to poison control centers across the country, this information is potentially life-saving.

Launching this week, an innovative bilingual text messaging service will provide consumers with tips, facts and news about accidental poisoning prevention in both English and Spanish. For the first time ever, consumers who opt-in to the service by texting the word TIPS or PUNTOS for Spanish to 69866 will receive one tip each day during National Poison Prevention week and then once a week for the rest of the year.

In addition, the California Poison Control System will use Facebook to make critical poisoning prevention information easily available. Quizzes designed to provide curious minds a way to test their knowledge of poisoning risks, myths, and popular culture will entertain, inform and let users show off their exploits with profile badges and cards.

"A little education goes a long way in this case," explained Richard Clark, MD, Director in the Division of Medical Toxicology at University of California, San Diego and Medical Director of the San Diego Division of the California Poison Control System. "Poisonings are preventable and teaching children as well as adults about the dangers is the best form of prevention."

At www.pillsvscandy, side-by-side photos of medicine and candy will test the ability to distinguish between look-alike items. This game shows how easy it can be to mistake everyday items and reinforces the importance of keeping products in their original containers, in a safe place, away from small children.

Finally, sharing poison prevention tips will be simple and rewarding at www.calpoisonecards.org where consumers can personalize helpful messages and share them with friends.

The California Poison Control System (CPCS) is dedicated to providing residents with the most up-to-date information and 24-hour help in case of poisoning. National Poison Prevention Week, March 14-21, provides the ideal opportunity to remind Californians about poison prevention as well as to provide information about potentially hazardous situations that exist in their own homes.

"We know that more and more of our consumers are getting information on their cell phones, through social media and community websites. As a result, we need to reach our audience where they are," said Dr. Stuart E. Heard, Executive Director of the California Poison Control System. "It is critical that all consumers are aware of the potential hazards in their own homes."

Tips for Keeping Kids Safe from Poisons

Keep the number 1-800-222-1222 on or near all phones. In case of an accidental poisoning, consumers should immediately call the CPCS for advice.

Keep medicines and cleaning products out of reach of children and in locked cabinets.

Always keep products in the containers they originally came in.

Never keep cleaning products, gasoline, antifreeze, pain and paint thinners, or lighter fluid in something you would use for food or a beverage.

Do not store food and household cleaners in the same cabinet.

Never call medicine candy.

Do not take medicine in front of children; they love to do what adults do.

If you are in the middle of taking medicine or using a cleaning product and you need to answer the door or phone, take it with you.

Keep things like make-up perfume, cigarettes, alcohol and vitamins where children can't reach them.

For more information, please visit: www.calpoison.org.

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