

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT: March 2009

Charlottesville Mayor to proclaim March 15-21 “Poison Prevention Week”

At the Monday, March 16, City Council Meeting, Charlottesville Mayor David Norris will sign a proclamation declaring March 15-21, 2008 as Poison Prevention Week. This is in conjunction with National Poison Prevention Week, established by Congress in 1961 (P.L. 87-319).

THE PROBLEM:

- Poisoning is the *second leading cause of injury-related hospitalization* and the *second leading cause of injury-related deaths* in Virginia, according to the Virginia Dept. of Health. ¹
- Leading causes of poisoning nationwide include:
 - Over-the-counter medicines
 - Personal products, like mouthwash or cosmetics
 - Pesticides
 - Cleaning products
 - Prescription medicines
 - Plants
- About half of all calls to the poison center are about children under the age of 6.
- Adults account for fewer calls than children, but adults are *95 times more likely than children* to suffer a serious injury or fatality from a poison exposure.

HELP FOR VIRGINIANS

- The Blue Ridge Poison Center is staffed by nurses, doctors, and pharmacists specially trained to treat poisonings and answer questions about poisons.
- Callers can reach the Blue Ridge Poison Center 24 hours a day, every day of the year, by calling toll free: 1-800-222-1222. All calls are confidential.
- By helping many callers treat their poison exposure at home, the Blue Ridge Poison Center estimates it *saved Virginians over \$5 million in unnecessary medical expenses in 2008.*

Celebrate National Poison Prevention Week by adopting these safety tips:

- Lock medicines and household products out of sight and reach of children.
- 20% of all medicines ingested by children belong to someone else...often a grandparent. Carefully supervise children when in someone else's home, and ask visitors not to leave purses or suitcases within reach of your young children.

- Never call medicine “candy.” Avoid taking medicine in front of young children.
- Labels protect us! Always follow the instructions on the labels of medicines and household products.
- Turn on the lights and put on your glasses before reading product and medicine labels. It is easy to make a mistake.
- Never approach or try to kill a snake if you suspect it might be poisonous. Just leave it alone.
- Learn the names of every plant growing in your yard or house; find out which ones might be toxic.
- Place the toll free number to the Blue Ridge Poison Center by every phone in your house.
- Call the Blue Ridge Poison Center right away if:
 - Someone swallowed something they shouldn’t,
 - Someone took the wrong kind, or wrong amount of medicine,
 - Someone splashed or spilled a product on their skin or in their eyes,
 - Someone breathed in a poison.

¹ Injury in Virginia 2006. Published by the Division of Injury and Violence Prevention, Virginia Department of Health: <http://www.vahealth.org/Injury/data/>

Note to media: If you are interested in following up on this announcement, please contact the Dept. of Media Relations at the Uva Health System: 434-243-2734. Thank you!