



Poison Prevention

Newsletter

December 2019

UPSTATE
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

Prevent Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

It is that time of year in the Northeast when we turn on the heat to ward off the winter cold.

Before using any heating source, whether in Syracuse during a snow storm or in Florida during a hurricane, be sure to take the steps outlined below to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning in your home.

Tips to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning

First, be sure to read all the directions and warnings before installing a CO detector. Note that most manufactures recommend the detector be placed on the wall, lower to the ground than a smoke detector. Follow directions.

Install a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm near bedrooms or living space on each floor of your home. If your alarm sounds, call emergency services (911 or your local fire department), and immediately move to fresh air (either outdoors or near an open door or window).

Know the symptoms of CO poisoning: headache, fatigue, dizziness, and shortness of breath. If you experience any of these symptoms, get fresh air right away and contact a doctor for proper diagnosis or call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

Make sure heating equipment is installed properly. Have a trained specialist inspect and tune up your heating system each year.

Keep portable space heaters at least 3 feet from anything that can burn, including bedding, furniture, and clothing. Never drape clothing over a space heater to dry.

Keep children and pets away from space heaters. Never leave children in a room alone when a space heater is in use.

When using a kerosene heater, keep a door open to the rest of the house or open a window slightly. This will reduce the chance of carbon monoxide build-up in the room.

Have your fireplace chimney and flue inspected each year and cleaned if needed. Open the flue and use a sturdy fireplace screen when you have a fire. Burn only untreated wood; never burn paper or pine branches - pieces can float out the chimney and ignite your roof, a neighbor's roof, or nearby trees.

If you use a wood-burning stove, have the chimney connection and flue checked each year. Make sure the stove is placed on an approved stove board to protect the floor from heat and coals.

Never use your range or oven to heat your home, even for a short time.

What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?

The initial signs and symptoms are headache, dizziness and nausea. People describe their symptoms as



being "flu like" but often note they feel better after being away from their homes. Long-term exposure to CO can cause heart and brain damage, which ultimately can lead to death. Delayed effects, caused by failure to get treatment or chronic exposure to low levels of CO include: memory loss, impaired thinking and confusion.

In a poison emergency or for poison prevention information, call the Poison Center. We are only a phone call away!

Click here for a brochure on prevention CO poisoning:

www.upstate.edu/poison/pdf/CO-brochure.pdf

Click here for a video to share with family or others:

www.upstate.edu/poison/community/teachingtools.php



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How Poisonous is it . . .

The poinsettia has had a reputation as a very poisonous and potentially deadly plant for some time. Researchers (and the team of toxicologists at the Poison Center) now say that poinsettias are not poisonous and that the early assessment of the plant's toxicity was flawed.

Eating part of a poinsettia will probably produce no symptoms at all or at worst produce only mild nausea and perhaps vomiting. A person will probably never get to the nausea and vomiting stage because many leaves have to be ingested to cause any effects, which isn't likely because the leaves are not tasty. Contact with the sap of a poinsettia may cause develop a mild itch or skin rash, however.

The ASPCA (American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) says that poinsettia is toxic for dogs and cats, causing stomach upset and occasional vomiting, but also says that the plant is "generally over-rated in toxicity".

Resources:

<https://dengarden.com/gardening/Christmas-Plants-Safe-and-Poisonous>

<https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants/poinsettia>



The Drug Enforcement Administration's semi-annual Drug Take Back day was held nationwide on Saturday October 26th, 2019.

In cooperation with many program partners, including the Onondaga County Drug Task Force and the Erie County's Opiate Epidemic Task Force, the Upstate New York Poison Center participated in events in Syracuse, Buffalo and Moravia. Working with local police departments at each site, the Poison Center distributed poison safety materials and polled participants at 2 of the sites. Most survey respondents reported they would have saved their drugs for the next take back day, if the event were not held, increasing chances of easy access to those meds within their homes. In Onondaga County few citizens were aware that ongoing takebacks were available year-round at local police departments, indicating a need for additional marketing efforts.

The Upstate New York Poison Center has been active in take back efforts since 2009, even prior to the DEA

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Toxicology Teaching Day

November 6th, 2019



The UNYPC's 23rd annual Toxicology Teaching Day was held November 6th at The Genesee Grande Hotel in Syracuse. Nearly 100 physicians, pharmacists, nurses and other health care providers attended the daylong event. The slate of speakers and events is designed to provide extensive, up-to-date information, essential to management of the poisoned patient. Topics this year included drug-induced takotsubo syndrome using extracorporeal membrane oxygenation

(ECMO) and a presentation on rethinking antidotes for hypoperfusion. During the afternoon session, the "Escape from the Tox Room" exercise was initiated at the event. Participants, divided into groups, solved "tox" puzzles at stations set up within the room by applying their toxicology knowledge. Stay tuned for the details for our 24th annual Toxicology Teaching Day fall 2020.

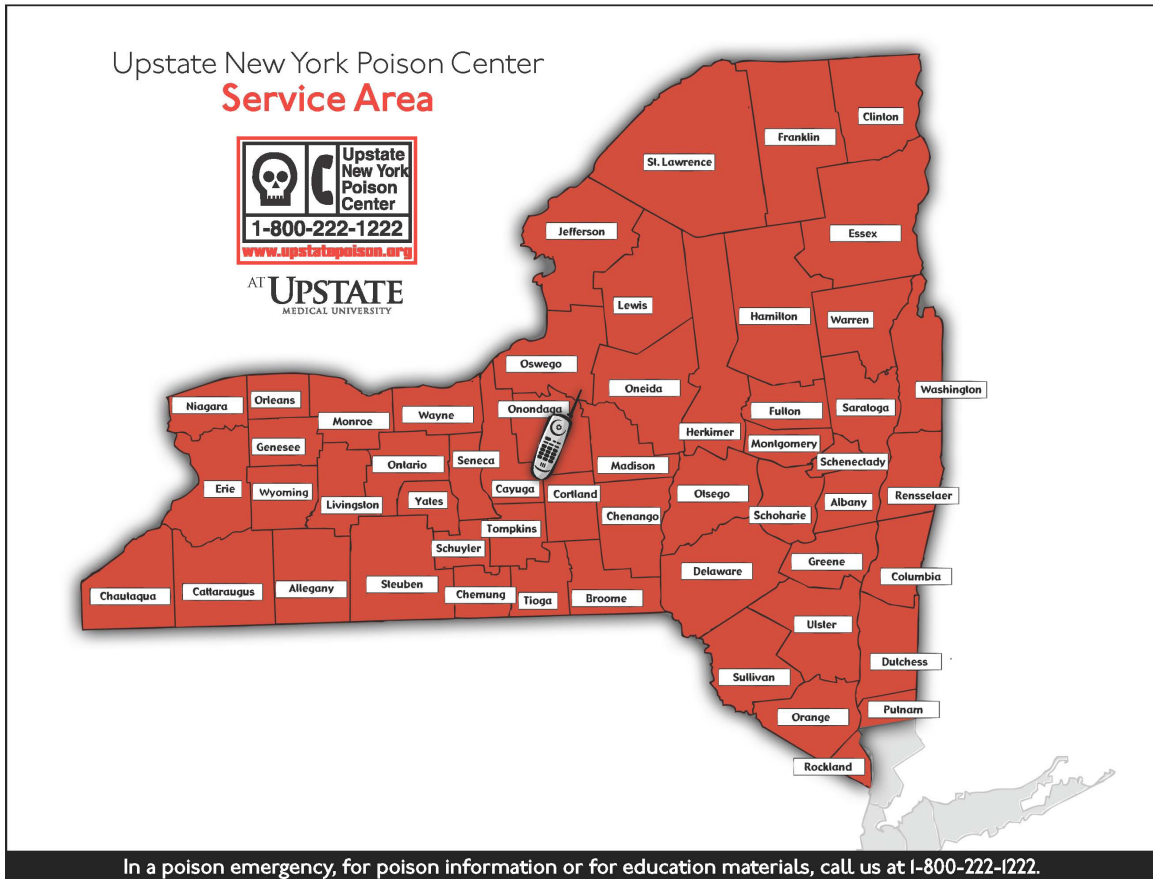


events and has been a lead agency to direct the public on proper disposal of their unwanted, expired meds. As a result, the Onondaga County SNADD program was initiated in 2015 and has collected nearly 8,000 pounds of unwanted meds since its inception. The program now has 10 police departments and 2 local colleges (OCC and SUNY ESF) collecting medication, including narcotics on an ongoing basis during regular business hours. In addition to the SNADD program, there are other locations, such as Upstate’s Pharmacy Outreach Services of University Hospital collecting meds on an ongoing basis. In Onondaga County contact: Gail Banach, Director of Public Education and Communications at the Upstate New York Poison Center at: banachg@upstate.edu or visit the website at: www.upstate.edu/poison/community/snadd-program.php.

In Erie County, over 7,500 pounds of unwanted/unused medication were collected during the DEA National Prescription Take Back Day. Residents were able to drop off their medication at one of many sites staffed by DEA agents and local police departments. The next DEA Take Back Day is scheduled for April 25, 2020.

For those looking to dispose of medications prior to the semi-annual DEA Take Back Day, Erie County has 36 Community Disposal Kiosks accepting unwanted medications and used needles/sharps. These are primarily located at town police departments, hospitals and some area college campuses. To find a site nearest you, visit www.thepointry.org. Since Erie County has started utilizing these secure collection boxes, over 120,000 pounds of medication have been collected for proper disposal. In Erie County contact Frank Scarpinato, Department of Health Environmental Compliance Specialist with questions about the Erie County Community Disposal Kiosk program (Frank.Scarpinato@erie.gov | www.erie.gov).

Take Back Events and ongoing collections using medication drop boxes provide an easy, no cost solution for proper disposal of medication, helping to keep our water supplies and our homes safe from dangerous medications. For more information on the DEA Drug Take Back events, visit: www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/



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