



[www.upstatepoison.org](http://www.upstatepoison.org)

**50 YEARS**

# Poison Prevention

Newsletter

March 2008

SUNY Upstate Medical University  
University Hospital • 750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

## March is National Poison Prevention Month

### March 16 – 22 is National Inhalants Awareness Week

Inhalation abuse is a silent epidemic that has been growing every year. Statistics have shown that 1 in every 5 eighth graders has intentionally inhaled household chemicals to get high. Parents don't know that inhalants, common household products that are cheap, legal and accessible, are as popular among middle school students as marijuana. Even fewer know the deadly effects these products have on the brain and body when they are inhaled or "huffed." It's like playing Russian Roulette. The user can die the 1st, 10th or 100th time a product is misused as an inhalant.

Inhalation Abuse Prevention through education has proven to work against this popular form of substance abuse. The

*Continued on page 2*

Poisoning continues to be one of the leading causes of injury and death in the United States. Every year, over two million people are unintentionally poisoned, with children under the age of 5 years being the greatest risk for poisoning. Nearly 90 percent of these poisonings occur in the home.

The good news is poisonings are preventable! We provide public educational programs for children, parents, seniors and many other segments of the population that are customized for the needs of the target audience. We work with health educators to promote poison prevention awareness in local communities and work closely with identified points-of-service agencies to provide educational programming and materials to the communities they serve.

You can help us to promote the poison prevention by hosting or attending a train-the-trainer program in your area. You can also help by ordering phone stickers, magnets and informational brochures and distributing them in your community. Visit our website for more information and to download free materials. Together we can make a difference.

Sources: [www.poisonprevention.org](http://www.poisonprevention.org) and [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### Going "Green" with Alternative Cleaning Products Can Reduce Poison Exposures

The Green movement is gaining momentum as more people realize the impact of chemicals on our environment and our health. Products used everyday such as cleaning products contain toxic chemicals. These products found in the home are often out in the open or hidden behind cabinet doors, in the kitchen, bathroom, and garage.

Alternative homemade cleaning formulas can often be just as effective in cleaning, disinfecting, and getting rid of unpleasant

*Continued on page 3*

## Getting High \_\_\_\_\_ *Continued from page 1*

Upstate New York Poison Center offers two Inhalation Abuse programs.

**Inhalation Abuse Program for Parents and Teachers** is one of the few programs of its kind in the nation. This program targets parents and teachers to make them aware of the dangers of inhalation abuse. The purpose of our program

*One of five students in America has used an inhalant to get high by the time he or she reaches the eighth grade.*

is to work together with the parents and teachers to directly impact families in our community, providing the necessary tools for prevention, through education and awareness. By collaborating with community organizations we present this crucial information to parents, teachers and school nurses. A successful partnership sends the powerful message that together we can make a difference.

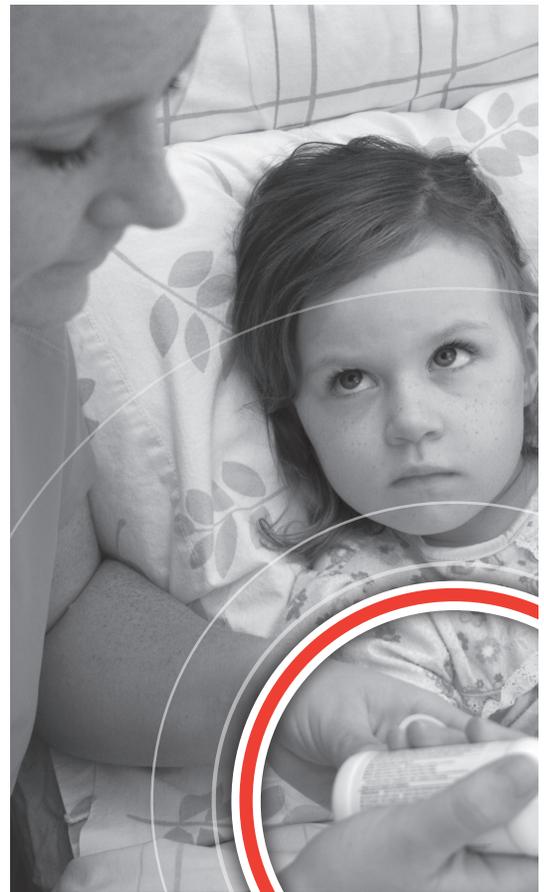
**Inhalation Abuse Awareness Program for Middle School Students** – This program focuses on targeting students in 5th grade and higher to make them aware of the dangers of inhalation abuse. The purpose of our program is to have an open and honest discussion on dangers of inhalation abuse by providing the facts and not the “how to” necessary for awareness and prevention.

To schedule a program for your school or community action agency call the Public Health Educator at 315-464-5375.

To learn more about the Inhalation Abuse visit the National Inhalation Prevention Coalition website at <http://www.inhalants.org/index.htm>.

Source: [inhalants.org](http://inhalants.org) and Upstate New York Poison Center

## MARCH POISON PREVENTION MONTH



Many over the counter medicines contain the same “active ingredient” as prescription medicines.

Acetaminophen relieves pain and reduces fever and is found in prescription and over the counter’s, such as cough and cold medicines.

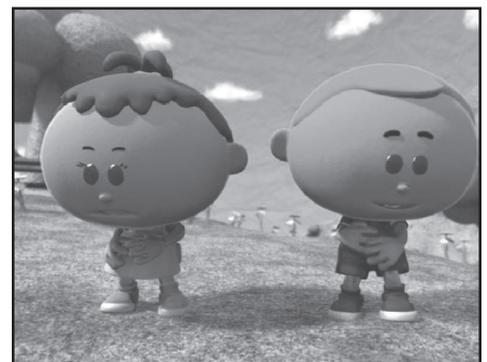
If combining two medications you may be taking too much medicine.

Always check with your doctor or pharmacist first.

## New Poison Prevention DVD/VHS For Children

Stop Ask First – a new and exciting poison prevention DVD/VHS for children is geared toward grades K – 3. This multimedia animated video features the new “first-family” of poison prevention, the Toon Family in STOP! Ask First. This entertaining and informative video reinforces the message to always “Stop and Ask First” before touching, tasting, or smelling anything.

Copies are available free of charge, to community educators, teachers and agencies that have taken our train-the-trainer program. Contact the Public Health Educator at 315-464-5375 to order or to schedule poison prevention training for your organization.



# Going “Green” Can Reduce Poison Exposures \_\_\_\_\_ *Continued from page 1*

odors. Alternative cleaning ingredients include: baking soda, washing soda, vinegar, lemon juice, liquid soaps, detergents, and essential oils. These ingredients can work as effectively as store bought cleaners if you take time to understand a bit about the chemistry behind it.

**Baking Soda** A commonly available mineral, baking soda is made from soda ash, and is slightly alkaline (it's pH is around 8.1; 7 is neutral). It neutralizes acid-based odors in water, and adsorbs odors from the air. Sprinkled on a damp sponge or cloth, baking soda can be used as a gentle non-abrasive cleanser for kitchen counter tops, sinks, bathtubs, ovens, and fiberglass. It will eliminate perspiration odors and even neutralize the smell of many chemicals if you add up to a cup per load to the laundry. It is a useful air freshener, and a fine carpet deodorizer.

**Washing Soda** A chemical neighbor of baking soda, washing soda (sodium carbonate) is much more strongly alkaline, with a pH around 11. It releases no harmful fumes and is far safer than a commercial solvent formula, but you should wear gloves when using it because it is caustic and it could irritate and burn your skin. Washing soda cuts grease, cleans petroleum oil, removes wax or lipstick, and neutralizes odors in the same way that baking soda does. Don't use it on fiberglass, aluminum or waxed floors—unless you intend to remove the wax.

**White Vinegar and Lemon Juice** White vinegar and lemon juice are acidic—they neutralize alkaline substances such as scale from hard water. Acids dissolve gummy buildup, eat away tarnish, and remove dirt from wood surfaces.

**Liquid Soaps and Detergent** Liquid soaps and detergents are necessary for cutting grease, and they are not the same thing. Soap is made from fats and lye. Detergents are synthetic materials discovered and synthesized early in this century. Unlike soap, detergents are designed specifically so that they don't react with hard water minerals and cause soap scum. If you have hard water, buy a biodegradable detergent without perfumes; if you have soft water you can use liquid soap (both are available in health food stores).

**Mold Killers and Disinfectants** The EPA recommends simple soap to use as a disinfectant. There are many essential oils, such as lavender, clove, and tea tree oil (an excellent natural fungicide), that are very antiseptic, as is grapefruit

seed extract. Use one teaspoon of essential oil to 2 cups of water in a spray bottle (make sure to avoid eyes). A grapefruit seed extract spray can be made by adding 20 drops of extract to a quart of water.

The potential risk of a poisonous exposure still exists if the homemade formulas are not properly labeled and stored out of the reach of children. Follow these precautions to avoid an unintentional poison exposure.

- Never mix homemade cleaners with store-bought cleaners
- Use cleaning products in a well-ventilated area
- Don't use food containers to mix homemade formulas
- Properly label all containers
- Store safely out of the reach of children and pets

It is always a good idea to have the number of the Poison Center, 1-800-222-1222, readily available in the event of an unintentional exposure. For stickers, magnets and information contact the Public Educator at 315-464-5375 or visit or website at [www.upstatepoison.org](http://www.upstatepoison.org).

Sources: Annie B. Bond, author of *Better Basics for the Home* (Three Rivers Press, 1999). <http://www.thegreenguide.com>, [www.About.com](http://www.About.com).

The Mission of the Upstate New York Poison Center is to assist the medical community and general public with poison emergencies, by providing state of the art management expertise. Combining education and research with community outreach and compassionate patient care, the staff of the UNYPC confirms its commitment to excellence through programs dedicated to wellness.

# Spring Poisoning Hazard for Pets

*Reviewed by Nancy O'Neil CSPI, RN, and Linda Jutton CSPI, RN.*

Celebrate the arrival of spring, and Easter, by preventing potential toxic ingestions in your beloved pets.

The effects of various toxins in animals can be dramatically different from those seen in humans. Certain plants and food products can cause severe illness or even death in animals. Two common substances are the "Easter Lily" and "Chocolate."



**Cats:** Easter Lily (*Lilium Longiflorum*)

Cats like to eat plants. Following ingestion of the Easter Lily renal (kidney) toxicity can occur, which could cause death.

Plants that are non-toxic to most pets are Spider plant, Rubber plant, and African Violet.

**Dogs:** Chocolate (*Theobromo Cacao*)



Most dogs will eat just about anything, even chocolate. The most dangerous is "bakers chocolate", because it can be as high as 99% cocoa.

Symptoms of chocolate poisoning in dogs generally depend on the weight of the dog and the amount of chocolate ingested dose-related and may be nervousness, tremor, seizure and coma; vomiting and diarrhea, and cardiac arrhythmia. Death may result.

## Keep Your Pets Safe

If you have any questions or suspect that your pet has been poisoned by either of these, please call immediately your veterinarian or the Animal Poison Control Center (888-426-4435) or visit their website [www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org) for more information.

