



March is Poison Awareness Month!

In the United States, nearly 82 people die every day as a result of unintentional poisoning; another 1,941 are treated in emergency departments. Accidental poisoning can happen to anyone, at any age.

Children

More than 50% of reported poisonings involve children under the age of six. Poisonings are most common in children, ages one and two. Accidental poisoning is one of the most common reasons children are seen in emergency rooms. Children are most often poisoned in their own homes. When poisons are not properly stored, children can mistake them for something good to eat or drink. For example, household cleaners are mistaken for juices, and medicine is mistaken for candy. Children are naturally curious about the taste, smell and texture of products. Children may be interested in the mechanics of a spray container. By tasting,



smelling or spraying a product, children learn more about it. Children copy what their parents or grandparents do, such as taking medication, drinking colored liquids, cleaning house, and spraying chemicals.

Teens and Young Adults

Kids call it "Huffing", "Sniffing" or "Bagging". It is the deliberate breathing of common household products to get high. Children as young as 10 try inhalants, and the abuse peaks among children ages 13 to 15. Nearly one of every seven eighth-graders has tried inhalants. Most kids are unaware that these household products can be poisonous and "huffing" can cause real damage to their heart, lungs, and brain. 49 percent of teen poison exposures are intentional.

Adults

Adults 20 and older make up 93 percent of poisoning deaths. Misuse is the most common cause of accidental poisoning in this group. Adults are usually guilty of not reading instructions carefully and taking heed of the warning labels. Older adults often fall victim to accidental medication

poisoning. This may happen when products are removed from their original containers to new, smaller containers. Health effects from drug interactions are also a concern, especially because this age group may use many different medications and may even share medications.

Prevention and Reaction

March is Poison Awareness Month and a great time to learn how to prevent and react to potential poisonings. Follow these tips to get you started!

- **Complete a home safety checklist**—find the checklist on www.iowaposition.org
- **Keep all poisons out of reach of children.**
- Read the warning labels of household products. **Label all potential poisons as "POISON"**.
- **When in doubt, call the Poison Control Center!** Poison control centers can be reached using the national toll free number 1-800-222-1222. The centers are staffed with trained professionals available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. In 2009, poison centers took 4.2 million calls. That is one every eight seconds.



GET RID OF UNWANTED MEDICINE AND PREVENT UNINTENTIONAL POISONING

There are several ways to get rid of unwanted medicine.

1. **Take it back to a pharmacy.** Bring unwanted and expired medicines into a participating *Take Away* pharmacy. Visit www.iarx.org/takeaway to find a *Take Away* pharmacy near you.
2. **Make it undesirable and dispose in trash.** For safety reasons, it is better to dispose of medications than to hang onto them. Be sure to follow the directions on the Scott County Waste Commission's Web site for making medicines undesirable to children and thieves before disposal. Visit www.wastecom.com.
3. **Take it to the Waste Commission of Scott County.** The Waste Commission provides free disposal of old or unused prescription and non-prescription medicine through its Household Hazardous Material program.

Why should you properly dispose of old medicine?

- Flushing medications can contaminate groundwater, pollute waterways, and harm wildlife.
- Some teens and adults abuse drugs. In a recent survey, 64% of teens that abused pain relievers said they got them from a friend or family member.
- Medicines can be confused for other things and cause accidental poisonings.

**SCOTT COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

Scott County Administrative Center, 4th Floor

600 West 4th Street

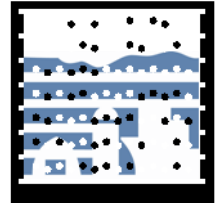
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Scott County Board of Health Meeting
Thursday, March 15, 2012; 12:00-1:00 p.m.
*Open to the Public. Location: Scott County
Administrative Center, Board Room-1st Floor*

OUR MISSION:

The Scott County Health Department is committed to promoting, protecting and preserving the health of the community by providing leadership and direction as advocates for the individual, the family, the community and the environment we serve.

OUR VISION:

As recognized and respected leaders in serving and protecting our citizens, we at the Scott County Health Department are committed to a safer, healthier community and environment. In so doing, we provide a multitude of services with Professionalism, Responsiveness, Involvement, Dedication, and Excellence.



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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.