



## HEALTH HINTS FROM THE FLIGHT CREW

The Air Life clinical staff handles medical emergencies every day, but they also have a wealth of knowledge when it comes to safety, minor injuries and ailments. In this issue, our perinatal flight nurse Sue Standly, RNC, shares tips on Lead Poisoning.



Sue Standly, RNC

Though it hasn't been a top news story since pencils switched to graphite, lead poisoning remains an important preventable public health problem. Children can be exposed to lead through a variety of sources – often in ways parents and grandparents might not suspect.

Although ingestion of paint dust from lead based paint remains the most significant source of lead exposure in children, lead can be present in unsuspected objects which, when ingested, can result in elevated lead levels. Lead can be present in curtain weights, fishing sinkers, lead shot/pellets and clothing accessories.

As we all know, children have a fondness for put-

ting things in their mouths. In 2002, the American Association of Poison Control Centers received over 80,000 calls regarding ingestion of foreign bodies, toys and miscellaneous objects in children under the age of six. Though it's unknown how many of these cases involved lead foreign bodies, poison centers received 6,000 calls about lead

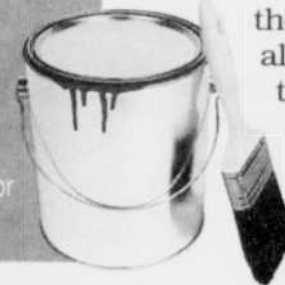
exposures in children under the age of six during that same time period.

By regulation, paint or surface coatings may not contain more than 0.06 percent lead content on items intended for children. For all other products not intended for children, the hazardous amount of lead is determined on case-by-case basis. Although testing for lead hazards is recommended prior to the sale, it is not required under current federal regulations. That's one reason it's so important to watch out for little ones around the house. That fishing sinker isn't just a choking hazard, it might also be a risk for lead poisoning.

### Where Else is Lead Lurking?

Lead can be found in curtain weights, fishing sinkers, lead shots/pellets and clothing accessories. But did you know about these potential sources of lead poisoning?

- ◆ Lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust found in deteriorating buildings.
- ◆ Materials used in making stained glass windows.
- ◆ Lead pipes, solder, brass fixtures and valves can contain lead that can contaminate drinking water.
- ◆ Home health remedies arzacan and greta (used for upset stomach or indigestion) and pay-loo-ah (used for rash or fever).



Symptoms of lead poisoning can include irritability, lethargy or hyperactivity, abdominal pain, constipation, or vomiting. If you suspect your little one may have ingested an object containing lead, call 911 immediately and seek medical help. Try to keep the child calm. And as always, prevention is the most important factor. If it's big enough to fit in a child's mouth, it should be kept safely out of reach.

## Membership dollars benefit patients in unexpected ways

Funds from membership fees help ground and air programs gain lifesaving skills and equipment

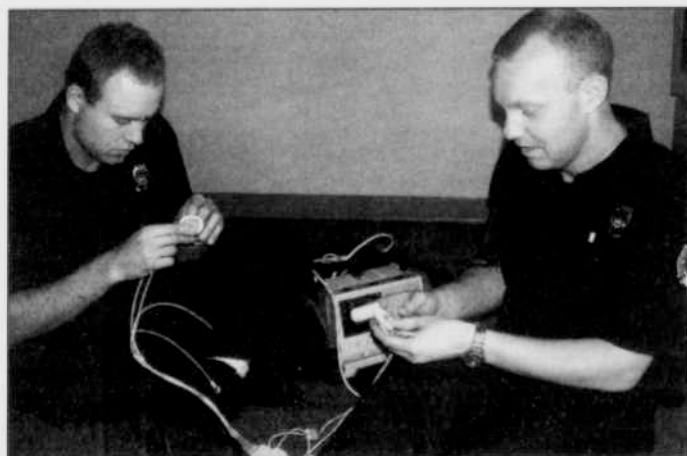
Most people already know the perks of membership with Air Life or any of our FireMed affiliates — protection from out-of-pocket costs for emergency transport is a pretty good deal. But most people aren't aware of the flurry of fringe benefits those membership dollars create behind the scenes — benefits you may very well reap in the future.

Air Life ground affiliate Redmond Fire & Rescue recently put membership revenue to good use by purchasing new defibrillators for emergency response vehicles. The defibrillators allow paramedics to shock a heart back to a regular rhythm. The monitors also allow paramedics to see a patient's heart rhythm and obtain 12 lead cardiac tracings, oxygen levels, blood pressure and other details. By combining \$20,000 in membership revenue with \$76,000 from the City of Redmond and a \$3,000 grant from Air Life, Redmond Fire & Rescue has made sure patients in their service area have access to the best lifesaving equipment available.

"We're now able to provide a higher level of care to our patients," explained Division Chief Dave Pickhardt. "These defibrillators are the most technologically advanced systems for pre-hospital care. They're the same as what's used on the Air Life aircraft."

The new systems are particularly critical when Redmond crews respond to rural areas and every second is critical. "With this equipment, we can send a fax of the patient's vitals from a ranch in Powell Butte to the ER," he added.

On the Air Life end of the spectrum, membership dollars have played an integral role in operations for more than 19 years. Most recently, membership revenue helped fund the SimMan® training aid to allow the clinical team to practice lifesaving trauma skills ranging from intubation to inserting a chest tube.



Paramedic student Dan Meyer (left) and paramedic Jim Robinson, of Redmond Fire & Rescue inspect the new defibrillators that were funded in part by membership dollars.

"With any skill, the more you practice, the more it becomes routine," explained Michele Moore, Air Life's lead flight respiratory therapist. "This piece of equipment will make sure the flight team's skills are as sharp as they can possibly be so they're ready

to deal with every emergency and trauma scenario imaginable."

Though Air Life manages the membership programs for 11 ground EMS agen-

cies, each agency decides how to use membership revenue. Typically, however, those funds are earmarked for training and equipment — something Air Life Membership Coordinator Wanda Grindstaff says is a benefit for members.

"When people write that check for their family membership, they don't usually realize that money is helping to pay for equipment that might save someone's life," she explained. "That \$45 or \$80 check could make all the difference for someone's mother, father or child."

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