

How to help in poisoning prevention

According to the Oregon Poison Center, an estimated four million poisonings occur in the United States each year. During 2003, approximately 45,000 poisonings were reported in Oregon. The majority occur in children.

A poison is anything that a person eats, breathes, or gets in the eyes or on the skin that can cause sickness or death. Most are accidental. Medicine is the number-one poisoning agent, followed by cleaning products, personal care products, and plants. People may come in contact with poisons without knowing they are harmful. This happens when a harmful item looks like something that isn't harmful, like candy or beverages. Sometimes harmful items are not stored in their original containers but in a food container such as a milk jug or butter tub.

Here are some steps you can take to keep your family safe from accidental poisonings.

- Keep products in their original containers with labels. Never store poisonous items in empty food containers. Store poisons away from food items.

- Read product labels and follow directions for safe and effective use, storage, and first aid.

- Use hazardous products away from children, toys, food, and pets, as directed. Since children tend to imitate adults, avoid taking medications in children's presence.

- Keep household products and medicines out of children's reach, preferably in a locked cabinet or closet, even if you don't have small children. Keep purses containing medication or cosmetics and pill dispensers out of children's reach. Many poisonings occur in homes where children are just visiting.

- Properly dispose of any unused or unnecessary household products. Throw out any unused or expired medicines. Call your local pharmacist for

safe methods of disposal.

- Refer to medicines by their proper names. Always turn on the light when giving or taking medicine.

- Ask for and use household substances that are available in child-resistant packaging. Insist on safety packaging of prescription medication. Remember that child-resistant caps are not child-proof. Once a child learns to open these caps, they will not keep a child safe. Always close caps tightly after each use.

- Clean up after working with potentially poisonous materials around the house, car, and garden. Properly dispose of leftover cleaners, sprays, and kerosene right away.

Prevention is best. However, keep the poison emergency HELP number (1-800-222-1222) handy in case of an emergency. Visit the Oregon Poison Center website, www.oregonpoison.org, for more information.

Health Notes

By Audeen Wagner



Allergy: A hypersensitivity to a specific substance (such as pollen, dust, etc.) which in similar amounts or degrees is harmless to most people.

Hay Fever: An allergic reaction to pollen that is usually seasonal and is marked by sneezing, nasal discharge and congestion, and itching and watering of the eyes.

However you define it, spring allergies affect many of us and can be pretty annoy-

ing.

So, what to do about it? Here are some suggestions from Providence Family Medicine:

- Oral antihistamine medicine. Symptoms clear up faster if antihistamines are given at the first sign of sneezing or sniffing. The main side effect of antihistamines is drowsiness. This may not be a problem if a dose at bedtime is all you need. Some "non-sedating" antihistamines are available that usually don't cause drowsiness. You may also need to take decongestants for relief. It is safe to take antihistamines and decongestants together

- Nasal sprays and drops may be prescribed. A nonprescription nose spray containing a medicine called cromolyn is also available. For some, the nose spray may be the first and only medicine you need.

- Allergy shots? If symptoms persist despite taking medication, your health care provider may suggest allergy shots. Skin tests may be done to identify the allergens, and a serum prepared to be injected over a period of time to reduce the allergic response. Over time, the shots should make you less sensitive to the allergens.

- Pollen removal: Pollens tend to collect on exposed body surfaces, especially in the hair. Frequent showers and hair washing every day helps.

There is much more information available than can fit in this space. So don't hesitate to call the clinic for help.

Message to Parents and Sitters:

Mom and Dad, if you leave your children with a sitter (or relatives) any time during the day or night, please make sure that you leave information regarding medical care, should there be an accident or sudden illness. This should include permission for treatment of illness or injury, as well as insurance information. The clinic is concerned about the legality of seeing minors without parents there or with no written authorization for treatment procedures. Remember to keep the paperwork in a file that is easily accessible. If there are questions about this process, please call Cathy Rozinek, RN, Clinic Manager, at 503-429-9191.

Mammovan: The Tuality Mammovan will be in Vernonia on Wednesday, April 19. This is a reminder to call the clinic to make an appointment for a mammogram.

positive and point out what children and parents are doing right. Make a donation to programs that support child abuse prevention, or help a family un-

der stress. Learn how to recognize and report signs of suspected abuse or neglect and finally get educated, request a speaker.

Child Abuse Prevention Month includes many activities targeted to raise abuse prevention and awareness, says Kenna. These activities include

- An open house at the Community Action Team (CAT) Head Start on April 6, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., 2750 Columbia Blvd., St Helens.
- Community Action Team, Caring Options event, on April

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April was proclaimed Child Abuse Prevention Month

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners, at the April 5 meeting, proclaimed April as Child Abuse Prevention and Sexual Assault Prevention Month. The Board urged all citizens in Columbia County to work toward the elimination of abuse and neglect.

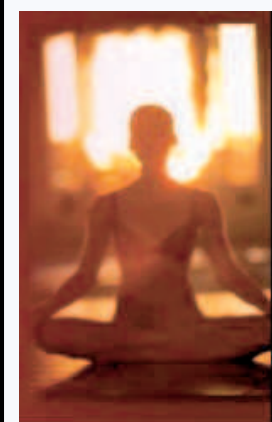
In 2004, 94 children in Columbia County were victims of child abuse, said Jan Spika

Kenna, Director for the Commission on Children & Families. The major causes were unemployment and alcohol and drug abuse, particularly methamphetamines. In recent years, Columbia County's child abuse rate (victims per 1,000 children) had been declining, however due to the increase in the use of methamphetamines abuse has increased from 5.8 per

1,000 in 2002 to 9.9 per 1,000 in 2003.

During the month of April and throughout the year, the Commission on Children and Families, the Department of Human Services and Oregon State University Extension are dedicated to raising awareness about child abuse and neglect and what we can do to help keep children safe.

Some things all of us can do, says Kenna, are: raise the issue with elected officials and ask them to support funding for programs and policies that support children and families; volunteer for programs like Healthy Start; report suspicious drug activity to law enforcement; make your neighborhood your extended family. Reach out to children and parents. Be



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"Skills for Life"

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2nd Class on Perception, April 12

3rd Class on Choices, April 19

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The public is invited to attend.