



Maryland Poison Center

Tox Tidbits



March 2002

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...this week is National Poison Prevention Week?

We hope that you have taken this opportunity to promote poison prevention and the proper response to poisonings in the home and workplace. Many hospitals, fire departments, schools, pharmacies and physicians' offices have obtained materials from the Maryland Poison Center to give to patients and others in the community. We thank you for helping us to keep people safe from poisons and remind you that "every week is poison prevention week!" We hope that you continue to educate the public about the poison center and poisonings.

For poison prevention education materials, call 410-706-2151.

PLEASE SHARE!

Post and share this edition of *Tox Tidbits* with your colleagues. Send any comments or questions to: *Tox Tidbits* at 410-706-7184 (FAX), or Lbooze@rx.umaryland.edu.

Supported by Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

The Poison Center is Calling....

"Why does the Poison Center keep calling me?" is a common question we get from nurses in the Emergency Department (ED) and on inpatient units. We'd like to take this opportunity to explain...

One of the functions of the Maryland Poison Center (MPC) is to provide surveillance and epidemiology information on poisonings. We do this through follow up phone calls, at appropriate intervals to the acuity of the poisoning, to track the clinical course. The data we gather is encoded and shared nationally through the Toxic Exposure Surveillance System (TESS), a data collection system that is administered by our national organization, the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC). Participation in national data collection enables those of us in the toxicology community to follow trends and to study the effectiveness of interventions, to try to keep treatments as up to date as possible. These studies are submitted for publication in the medical literature and are also presented at national and international toxicology conferences.

Another function of the MPC is to ensure that patients are being treated optimally. We often recommend treatment based on lab values or symptoms that have developed after admission to the ED or inpatient floors. We also act as a resource for you, the providers of care. Take the opportunity to ask questions about your patient's poisoning! We would be glad to answer them and to fax studies or review articles to help you understand the patient's clinical course and treatment, and to help you make informed clinical decisions.

We understand that there are hectic times in your shift when you cannot get to the phone for various reasons; we have very similar times at the poison center. Let us know if you would prefer to call us back at your convenience or if you would like us to call you back later. Our goals are the same as yours: to prevent or minimize the toxic effects of poisonings, which translates into less suffering for your patients and shorter lengths of stay in your hospital.

Eric Schuetz, BSP Pharm, CSPI

FOR POISONING EMERGENCIES, CALL: 1-800-222-1222