FROM THE DIRECTOR

TENNESSEE POISON CENTER RECEIVES 1,000,000 CALLS

Tennessee Poison Center recently received its 1 millionth call to the Poison Help hotline for poison emergency and information calls! This is quite a milestone for TPC.

The Center was established in 1988 and received 18,000 calls in its initial year. Since 1988, Tennessee Poison Center has grown from a regional poison control center to a statewide center providing programs to 6 million Tennessee residents in 95 counties.

The U.S. Congress established the nationwide Poison Help Hotline for poison emergency and information calls – 1-800-222-1222. Callers dialing this hotline from anywhere in the United States will reach the closest poison control center. All calls placed in Tennessee are routed to the Tennessee Poison Center. Calls are answered by poison specialists, who are registered nurses, pharmacists or physicians. These specialists answer between 350-375 calls each day. In 2006, the Tennessee Poison Center received 127,000 calls from health care professionals and the public, and the center became the sixth busiest poison control center in the country.

Tennessee Poison Center is a perfect example of an effective and efficient health care service. It has been estimated that more than $7 in unnecessary health care expenditures is averted for each $1 invested in a poison control center.

In fact, poison control centers are equal to immunizations in public health delivery by significantly reducing health care costs and costs to citizens. A recent study estimated that Tennessee Poison Center saves the state more than $5.7 million in health care costs annually.

Tennessee Poison Center provides our programs with support from state and federal grants, hospitals throughout Tennessee, contributions from community organizations and individual donations. We are looking forward to celebrating another milestone in 2008 - our 20th anniversary!

Donna Seger, M.D.
Executive Director, Tennessee Poison Center

www.tnpoisoncenter.org
COULD THIS HAPPEN TO YOU?

The Poison Specialist could hear panic in the mother’s voice as she held back tears. She was trying so hard to tell what had happened, but she was scared and apologized for allowing her child access to “something”. The Poison Specialist told her to take a deep breath and tell what had happened. She was able to say two words - SILICA GEL. After it was determined that the child was not choking, the Specialist was able to assure her that despite the scary “DO NOT EAT” label on silica gel packets, they are not toxic, only a choking hazard. The mother was advised to wipe her child’s mouth of the silica beads and offer something to drink.

The mother then seemed a little embarrassed for calling and for being so concerned. The Specialist reassured her that it is always appropriate to be concerned with unknown ingestions and to always call Tennessee Poison Center first when a poisoning is suspected. This parent and child was spared of an unnecessary trip to the emergency room by calling Tennessee Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

SNAKE SAFETY

Tennessee Poison Center provides help in an everyday poison emergency and in more unusual situations, such as snakebites. Two board certified toxicologists are available 24/7 to provide expert medical advice in the event of a poisonous snakebite. Tennessee is indigenous to three types of poisonous snakes:

- Timber Rattlesnake
- Copperhead
- Cottonmouth (water moccasin)

Most snakes are not poisonous, but if you or someone you know is bitten by a poisonous snake, call Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222 immediately.

To prevent snake bites, wear shoes outside in the summer and wear high socks when walking through wooded areas. And never pick up a snake.

THANK YOU TO UNITED WAY!

Tennessee Poison Center would not be able to operate without community support. Each year we apply to United Way agencies throughout Tennessee for funding to help support our vital programs. United Way dollars help fund:

- the Poison Help calls from the respective county
- poison education programs and the distribution of poison prevention literature in the county
- 24 hour surveillance for chemical and biological terrorism.

Tennessee Poison Center is proud to be a member agency of the following United Way agencies in FY 2007:

- United Way of Bedford County
- United Fund of Cumberland County
- United Way of Metropolitan Nashville
- United Way of DeKalb County
- United Way of Dickson County
- United Way of Franklin County
- United Way of Greene County
- United Way of the Highland Rim
- United Way of Maury County
- United Way of the Mid-South
- United Way of Robertson County
- United Way of Rutherford and Cannon Counties
- United Way of Sumner County
- United Way of Williamson County
- United Way of Wilson County
THANK YOU!

to these contributors in Fiscal Year 2007!

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TENNESSEE HOSPITALS

Athens Regional Medical Center
Baptist Hospital – DeKalb County
Baptist Hospital – Hickman County
Baptist Hospital - Nashville
Baptist Hospital of Cocke County
Baptist Hospital of East Tennessee
Baptist Memorial Hospital Collierville
Baptist Memorial Hospital Huntingdon
Baptist Memorial Hospital Lauderdale
Baptist Memorial Hospital Memphis
Baptist Memorial Hospital Tipton
Baptist Memorial Hospital Union City
Baptist Memorial Hospital for Women
Baptist Rehabilitation Germantown
Bedford County Medical Center
Blount Memorial Hospital
Bolivar General Hospital
Camden General Hospital
Cartage General Hospital
Centennial Medical Center
Claiborne County Hospital
Cookeville Regional Medical Center
Crockett General Hospital
Cumberland Medical Center
Cumberland River Hospital
Delta Medical Center
Dyersburg Regional Medical Center
Eastridge Medical Center
East Tennessee Children’s Hospital
Emerald Hodgson Hospital
Gateway Medical Center
Gibson General Hospital
Grandview Medical Center
Hardin Medical Center
Harton Regional Medical Center
Hawkins County Memorial Hospital
Henderson County Community Hospital
Hendersonville Medical Center
Henry County Medical Center
Hillside Hospital
Holston Valley Medical Center
Horizon Medical Center
Humboldt General Hospital
Indian Path Medical Center
Indian Path Pavilion
Jackson-Madison County General Hospital
Jamestown Regional Medical Center
Jellico Community Hospital
Johnson City Medical Center
Johnson City Specialty Hospital
Johnson County Health Center
Laughlin Memorial Hospital
Lincoln Medical Center
Livingston Regional Hospital
Macon County General Hospital
Marshall Medical Center
Maury Regional Hospital
McKenzie Regional Hospital
McNairy Hospital
Medical Center of Manchester
Memorial Healthcare System
Middle Tennessee Medical Center
Milan General Hospital
Morristown-Hamblen Healthcare System
Nashville General Hospital
Northside Hospital
Parkridge Medical Center
Perry Community Hospital
Quillen Rehabilitation Hospital
Regional Hospital of Jackson
Rhea Medical Center
River Park Hospital
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital
St. Mary’s Jefferson Memorial Hospital
St. Mary’s Medical Center
St. Mary’s Medical Center of Campbell County
St. Thomas Hospital
Skyline Medical Center
Smith County Memorial Hospital
Southern Hills Medical Center
Southern Tennessee Medical Center
StoneCrest Medical Center
Summit Medical Center
Sumner Regional Medical Center
Sycamore Shoals Hospital
Takoma Adventist Hospital
Tennessee Christian Medical Center
Three Rivers Hospital
TriStar Health System, Inc.
Trousdale Medical Center
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
U.T. Medical Center
Unicoi County Memorial Hospital
University Medical Center
Valley Behavioral Health
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Volunteer Hospital
Wayne Medical Center
Williamson Medical Center
Woodridge Hospital
Woods Memorial Hospital
Tennessee Poison center receives thousands of calls each year that involve medication. Medication in backpacks or lunchboxes can be dangerous, not only to the child to whom the medication is intended but to classmates. Keep your child as safe as possible by taking the following steps to reduce the risk of accidental poisoning:

✦ Instruct your child never to take someone else’s medicine.

✦ Find out the school’s policy on bringing and administering medication and follow it.

✦ Keep medication in its original container or ask the pharmacist for another pill vial to store only the amount necessary for school.

✦ Present the teacher/nurse written information with the name of your child, the name of the medication and detailed instructions. Take every precaution to prevent an accident from happening.

✦ Include the number for Tennessee Poison Center (1-800-222-1222) on the container or instructions. Telephone stickers with the hotline number are free of charge - just call.