



## COUNTY OF PRINCE WILLIAM

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FIRE & RESCUE  
SYSTEM

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### PRESS RELEASE

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### **National Poison Prevention Week 2019 March 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>**

The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) are uniting with the nation's 55 poison control centers to celebrate National Poison Prevention Week (March 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>). This annual event, which occurs during the 3<sup>rd</sup> full week of March, raises awareness about poisonings; the leading cause of injury deaths in the U.S. Many poisonings are preventable and treatable due to expert help of the poison control centers who are just a phone call away.

In 2017, the poison control centers provided telephone guidance to approximately 2.1 million poison exposures; that's 1 poison exposure reported every 14.9 seconds. During this period, approximately 53% of human exposure cases involved drugs and medications. Other exposures were household and personal products, plants, mushrooms, pesticides, animal bites and stings, carbon monoxide, and many other types of non-pharmaceutical substances. Although exposure by ingestion accounted for 79% of these cases, people were also exposed to potentially dangerous substances through the lungs, skin, eyes and other routes.

Among adults, more than 90% of poisoning deaths occur among individuals over the age of 20 due to pain medications -- the most common substance implicated in adult poison exposures. In 2017, drug overdoses resulted in more than 70,000 deaths, among these, 68% involved opioids of which 36% involved prescription opioids, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

During National Poison Prevention Week, "Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons!" is the basic theme, of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), due to half of all cases of poison exposure are children under the age of 6. The leading most common substances in pediatric exposures are cosmetics and personal care products followed by cleaning substances and pain medications ([National Capital Poison Center](http://www.nationalcapitalpoisoncenter.org)). Public education, child-resistant closure requirements and the experts at the Poison Help Line has helped reduce the number of pediatric poisonings; however, we still have a long way to go.

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Most poison exposures reported to the U.S. poison centers are unintentional (77%) often occurring when individuals, parents, caregivers become distracted. Acting Chief Tim Keen, of the Prince William County Fire and Rescue System, urges residents to be vigilant in their daily routines and specifically when there is the slightest change within a routine.

To help prevent unintentional poisonings in the home, follow these simple safety tips:

- Use child-resistant containers whenever possible.
- Never refer to medications as “candy”.
- Read the label on all medicines and products, to follow directions exactly.
- Use measuring devices that come with medications. **Do Not** Guess - Be Sure of the dose.
- Store all medications, pesticides and laundry products out of the reach of children.
- Keep all products in their original containers. **Do Not** store in unmarked bottles.
- **Do not** mix household products together; this could make a poisonous gas.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms.
- Store the poison center phone number on every phone: **1-800-222-1222**.

Although 93% of human exposures reported to poison control centers, occurred in the home, they can occur anywhere, such as the workplace, schools, outdoors, etc. Any substance can be harmful if used in the wrong way, used by the wrong person or used in the wrong amount; anyone can experience a poison emergency.

For additional information on poison prevention, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), Consumer Product Safety Commission [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) and the American Association of Poison Control Centers [www.aapcc.org/prevention/nppw](http://www.aapcc.org/prevention/nppw).

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