



TIPS FOR END OF SUMMER SAFETY

When people call the Nebraska Regional Poison Center (NRPC), one of their first questions is: “Do I need to go to the Emergency Room?” A large majority of the callers are reassured to learn that their exposure will be safely managed at home. In fact, 75% of callers to the poison center will avoid a trip to the hospital. The registered nurses and physician assistants will give the callers information on what to do, what to watch for, and will often make follow-up calls to see how the patient is doing.

A recent study showed that there has been a 67% increase in the number of uninsured residents in Nebraska in the last decade. By calling the poison center when you or someone you care about is exposed to a poison, you will most likely benefit from the 21 million dollars that is saved by the NRPC each year through preventing unnecessary emergency department visits.

The call volume to the NRPC is the busiest this time of year. Here are some of the common summer calls.

Insect Repellents: DEET containing insecticides should be applied sparingly and only applied to exposed skin and clothing. Remember, lower concentrations of less than 10% have been found to be just as effective as higher concentrations.

Bee Stings: The bee population has started to increase and will be at its peak until the first freeze. If you are stung- call the poison center. Close observation for allergic reaction is important, especially in the first hour after a sting.

Poisonous plants/berries: Berries are attractive to small children and can cause some unpleasant symptoms. If you're not sure if your plants are poisonous or if you want a list of toxic plants, the poison center is here to help you.

Bleach: Household bleach has many uses around the house but it can cause problems if it gets in the eye or is swallowed. Bleach should never be used with other cleaning products. When it comes in contact with other cleaners that contain acids or ammonia - a dangerous gas can form causing serious respiratory problems.

Before you head out to the emergency room for a poisoning – call the poison center first. The call is free to the public and you will be given expert advice. By calling 1-800-222-1222 you will be taking advantage of one of the best health care deals around.