

For Immediate Release
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Would you use Mr. Yuk?

March 14-20, 2010 is National Poison Prevention Week and the staff at the Washington Poison Center, located in Seattle and servicing the entire state with its toll-free 24-hr hotline, wants to know if you would call the Poison Center if a poisoning or medication error may have occurred.

Historically known for its medical advice regarding children, the Washington Poison Center (WAPC) expanded its service to include all ages over 20 years ago. This year's PPW theme, "I'm a Yuk User!" displays the vast array of Washington residents that call the Poison Center, also known as Poison Control and Mr. Yuk.

Mr. Yuk, the round, green and scowling symbol of poison safety, has been part of the culture of Washington State since 1974. The WAPC gives out Mr. Yuk stickers and magnets as a means for people to have the poison hotline phone number, **1-800-222-1222**, easily accessible as it is in the Mr. Yuk symbol.

"Mr. Yuk is here for everyone, day and night," said Jim Williams, Executive Director of the WAPC. "There are millions and millions of chemicals and products in this world and just about as many good reasons to call us." Examples of calls to the WAPC include: a child drank antifreeze from a reused juice bottle; a husband forgot he already took his dose of medication an hour ago; a cat played in a container of laundry soap; or a teenager got hair dye in her eyes. Every Monday morning, the WAPC posts "Another Good Reason to Call the Poison Center" on their Facebook fan page www.facebook.com/MrYukWA.

"It seems to be a 'hidden fact' that we are staffed by pharmacists, nurses and other medical professionals that are specially-trained in poison information," said Williams. Nearly 17% of calls received by the WAPC are from other medical professionals including other nurses, pharmacists, paramedics, emergency department physicians and veterinarians. With 24/7 access to a physician toxicologist and a database containing information on millions of drugs, chemicals and toxins, "our staff has the expertise to help treat and prevent a poisoning for people and for animals of all ages."

If you are concerned that a poisoning may have occurred, immediately call your Poison Center's 24/7 hotline at **1-800-222-1222**. It does not have to be an emergency to call – call with questions about medication interactions, product use or plant toxicity. Calling within Washington State will connect you to one of the Washington Poison Center's specially-trained pharmacists, nurses and poison specialists. Poison help is always free and confidential (with the exception of \$30 fee for animal calls). Services are available for people with hearing problems and for non-English speakers.

www.wapc.org

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About National Poison Prevention Week

Congress established National Poison Prevention Week more than forty years ago to raise awareness of unintentional poisonings. Over one million poisonings involving children are reported each year. Many of these poisonings could have been prevented. Poison centers organize events during this special week to educate parents and others about which household products are poisonous, how to prevent poisonings from occurring and what to do if a poisoning occurs.

About the Washington Poison Center

The Washington Poison Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization, prevents harm from poisonings by being the primary resource for poison treatment, education and prevention. Reachable 24/7, the national poison hotline: **1-800-222-1222** will connect you to specially-trained nurses, pharmacists and poison specialists. Poison help is always free and confidential. Services are available for people with hearing problems and for non-English speakers.