

For Immediate Release
June 15, 2009

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Garage Sale Poisonings

During the summer months in Washington State it is hard to miss the garage/ yard/ estate sale signs. One man's junk is another man's treasure, especially for bargain hunters. Some people are looking for a different kind of bargain than the seller may think. Poisons, especially medications, may be lurking among the items being sold, especially at estate sales.

The Washington Poison Center (WAPC) recorded more than 76,000 cases of humans and animals exposed to toxic substances in 2008. The most common calls – accounting for over half of those placed to the center's 24-hour hotline – were about prescription and over-the-counter substances.

According to the State Department of Health, poisonings and drug overdoses are the leading causes of unintentional injury-related deaths, surpassing motor vehicle crashes. “Although these deaths are often from people controlling pain with opioid drugs, such as methadone or oxycodone, there are a number of deaths due to drug abuse.” said Dr. William Hurley, Medical Director of the Washington Poison Center.

Before hosting an estate sale where buyers enter the home or a garage sale, owners should always thoroughly check all items that could easily contain medications, such as purses, pants pockets, briefcases, luggage and other containers. Dispose of unwanted medications at an Unwanted Medication Return Program location. Visit www.wapc.org for a link to pharmacy locations that accept unwanted medications.

Call **1-800-222-1222** if a poisoning or medication misuse occurs for free, expert treatment advice.

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