

# THE YUK REPORT

Expert Poison Information 24/7

Washington Poison Center

1-800-222-1222

Winter 2006

## 50 Year Medical Director Honored

**D**id you know Mr. Yuk lives in Washington? Okay, so his name really is not Mr. Yuk, but after 50 years of being a poison center Medical Director, Dr. William O. Robertson has earned that name!

Dr. Robertson is an expert on poisons and wrote chapters on poisoning for the Merck Manual, Cecil's Textbook of Medicine and Dreisback's Handbook of Poisons. Just Google "William O. Robertson" and you will find pages and pages of organizations to which he has belonged and hundreds of articles and books he has written.

Throughout his career, Dr. Robertson has been an advocate for patient safety, poison prevention and reducing medical errors. His early work in the 1960's highlighted the role of staying home to treat poisoning. His recommendations led to the use of Syrup of Ipecac (the medicine that makes you vomit).

He and Dr. Bob Scherz at Madigan Hospital were the first to show the value of "palm-n-turn" child-resistant safety caps and got the Consumer Product Safety Commission to

require their use. This one invention cut poisonings in toddlers by 80%.

In Washington State, he backed the first state law requiring the use of ID imprints on pills. "The plain unmarked white pill was leading to big mistakes in virtually all institutions," he explains.

In 2006 Dr. Robertson saw more than 20 years of advocacy pay off with the new "anti-scribbling law" which went into effect this year. The



established The William O. Robertson, MD Award, to be given each year to a community member who is making a difference in poison

prevention. In addition, Dr. Robertson received lifetime achievement awards from the WAPC, the Washington State Department of Health and the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

Of all his accomplishments what is he the most proud of? "That my wife said yes," he jokes. Dr. Robertson will be resigning

from his official role in late 2006 but will still be available for consultation.

For a more complete biography of Dr. Robertson or to contribute to the William O. Robertson Honorary Fund, please visit our website: [www.wapc.org](http://www.wapc.org).

### Did you know...

- ... 282 toddlers got into a tobacco product last year in Washington alone?
- ... the average senior is taking 7 medications daily?
- ... last holiday season 188 people called with food safety questions? 471 others wished they had called before they ate.

new law requires all medication prescriptions (Rx) in the State of Washington to be readable, reducing medication errors.

At its Inaugural "Friends of Mr. Yuk" Fundraising Luncheon, the Washington Poison Center

### From the Files

### Case Report

**Time:** 20:24 - Mother called about her 5 year old son. Yesterday, they purchased watermelon flavored toothpaste, which the son used for the first time that night.

About 10 minutes ago, the son squeezed out the tube of toothpaste into a glass and added water. Mother found him sipping on the mixture. She called concerned about the fluoride warning on the label.

**Assessment:** Some risks from both fluoride and sorbitol (the sweetener used to give watermelon flavor). Fluoride may cause stomach upset and vomiting. Sorbitol can be a laxative.

**Treatment:** Provide milk and other calcium products to inactivate fluoride. Watch for signs and symptoms of stomach upset and diarrhea. Call the WAPC back if any signs or symptoms occur.

# 'Tis the Season to be Poisoned

by John H. Trestrail III, RPh, ABAT  
DeVos Children's Hospital  
Regional Poison Center

'T was the morning post-party, when all through the house,

No adult was stirring, not even your spouse.

The children, you thought, were asleep in their beds.

But, what you didn't know, they had other ideas in their heads.

Your house was awash in post-party trash,

And the kids thought this was a gold mine, better than cash.

There were ashtrays with butts and glasses with drink

And a visitor's purse lay there by the sink.

The kids were delighted and felt ever so free,

And then their bright eyes-locked onto the tree!

There was tinsel, and lights that bubbled so merry,

And a strange plant with fruits, called "Jerusalem Cherry".

Food was left out on the table all night,

And if they could have seen the bacteria, what a horrible sight!

And there by the fireplace was a box shaped just right,

That contained some powder to make fire colors bright.

A small toy broke open, and there at their feet,

Was a round tiny battery that looked good to eat.

As you see your home, where you thought poisons naught,

On this holiday season, was NOT as safe as you thought!

As you rose from your sleep and rubbed your eyes free,

You looked for the kids, and a disaster you see!

You sprang to the phone, not a moment to spare,

And talked to the folks you knew would be there.

Your Poison Center sure helped you get through the mix,

And you thought-" How'd we ever get into this fix?"

For you see holidays can present problems so rare,

That before they can happen, you must be sure to prepare.

It takes just a moment to think what might be,

And clean up your trash, so your home's poison free.

And so, my dear friends, keep the holidays bright,

Put away all, and sleep peaceful tonight.

*Enjoy the holidays, but be aware of potential hazards!!!*



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*Thank You!*

Thank you to our donors, table hosts and sponsors  
for the success of the

*Inaugural Friends of Mr. Yuk Fundraising Luncheon*

The event raised over \$25,000 for WAPC services



## Support Mr. Yuk

The Washington Poison Center is a nonprofit, charitable organization relying on community support. To make a tax-deductible donation, send a check or money order to:

**Washington Poison Center**  
155 NE 100<sup>th</sup> Street, #400  
Seattle, WA 98125-8011

Or, call 1-800-572-4104 x2367 to donate by credit card.

*Mr. Yuk thanks you for your help!*

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