

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Celeste Philip, MD, MPH**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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## TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT POISONINGS IN YOUR HOME DURING NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK, MARCH 19 - 25

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**Port Charlotte, Fla. –** During the 56<sup>th</sup> National Poison Prevention Week, celebrated March 19-25 this year, the Florida Department of Health in Charlotte is sharing tips to ensure the safety of homes and communities and help prevent poisonings. In 2016, nearly 38,000 poison exposure calls reported in Florida were regarding children age 5 and under. Poisonings are completely preventable and it is every adult's responsibility to keep children safe from harmful exposure to medications and chemicals around the home.

"Taking extra precautions in your home is always worth the effort," stated Dr. Frank L. Lepore, Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County. "And as parents and caregivers, it is our responsibility to know what to do should an accidental poisoning happen."

Florida's Poison Control Centers handled 146,664 incoming calls during 2016. Poisonings can happen quickly and it is important to know how to prevent poisoning and what to do in case you or your children consume a potentially dangerous product. Always keep the Poison Help Line at 1-800-222-1222 visibly posted in your home or classroom in case of an emergency.

The Florida Poison Information Center Network recommends the following tips for poison prevention.

- Install safety latches on cabinets and drawers;
- Keep all medicines, cleaning supplies and chemicals out of site and reach of children;
- Try to purchase products with child-proof packaging when available;
- Keep products in their original packaging, do not store them in food containers;
- Always read product labels and follow directions exactly; and
- Do not call medicine "candy" when giving it to children.

Safe Kids Southwest Florida's Charlotte County coordinator Heather Boyd added, "In 2015, there were 239 poisonings in Charlotte County in children less than 12 years old. The most common poisons for

children in this age group are household cleaners, cosmetics, medications, foreign objects, and ointments. Anyone with children in their home should be extra cautious when storing these items.”

The Poison Help Line is free, confidential, and multilingual and automatically directs the caller to the poison control center covering their geographic area.

Download the [poison patrol checklist](#) to help identify and safely store household poisons to keep your family safe and healthy.

### **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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