⚠ WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Poisonings happen to people in all age groups. Of all the deaths due to injuries, poisonings are the leading cause of injury death in Florida for ages 25 – 54 years. According to stats from FL Department of Health, 54% of these deaths involved poisoning with medications. Specifically, 44% involved pain medications.

❓ HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

The majority of calls to Florida's Poison Control Centers involve accidental (unintentional) poisonings due to problems such as food poisoning, inhalation of fumes, chemical splashes or insect stings. In 2013, FL Poison Information Centers received calls about 39,681 cases involving people age 20 years and older. Typical situations are:

- Failure to read label instructions
- Not wearing gloves or working in open air when dealing with corrosive products
- Inhaling carbon monoxide from portable generators or a running car engine
- Poor handwashing or cleaning techniques when preparing food
- Power outage causing spoiled foods
- Mistaking a plant for food
- Mixing cleaners
- Inhaling pesticide spray
- Mixing up medication doses
- Taking another person's medicine
- Putting a chemical in a drinking cup
- Cleaners splashed in the eye

✅ PREVENTION STRATEGIES

It's easy to think about prevention after looking at all the causes of poisoning listed above. Allow time to prepare and use products wisely.

- Before purchasing a product, consider whether it's safe to use around pregnant women, pets, children or people with allergies.
- Note whether gloves, mask or eye protections are recommended for product use.
- Wash hands and surfaces before and after food preparation.
- Wear insect repellent when outdoors. Use low percentage DEET products on children.
- Run generators and cars far away from open windows and doors. Install a CO detector.

For any poisoning or medicine mistake, call your poison control center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

Calls are answered by doctors, nurses and pharmacists, and are quick, free and confidential. www.floridapoisoncontrol.org