

# ASK AHSC

## ANSWERS TO HEALTH QUESTIONS

From the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center (AHSC) in Tucson

**Q** What should I do if my family has a “poison emergency” while we’re traveling and camping this summer?

**A** If you have a poison emergency, whether you are in Arizona or anywhere in the United States, call 1-800-222-1222 right away.

1-800-222-1222 is the new nationwide toll-free hotline that makes it easier to get information and help in cases of accidental poisoning, venomous bites or contact with poisonous plants. No matter where you are in the U.S., you’ll know the number for experts at the closest local poison center.

The hotline provides access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to local poison experts who will respond immediately to poison emergencies. They also can answer non-emergency poison-related questions about medications, household products, other potentially dangerous substances and venomous critters and poisonous plants.

When you dial 1-800-222-1222 anywhere in the U.S., you’ll be connected automatically to specially trained poison experts at the closest local poison facility. By connecting callers to the closest center, the national hotline helps ensure that callers can always reach health care specialists most familiar with local

concerns and the local health care community.

In Arizona, callers in areas outside Maricopa County will be connected to pharmacists and poison specialists at the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center in Tucson.

Inside Maricopa County, callers will be connected to the Good Samaritan Regional Poison Center in Phoenix.



Outside Arizona, callers will be connected to poison experts at the nearest poison center.

While the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center has joined with poison centers across the U.S. using the new number, the Center’s current toll-free number, 1-800-362-0101, and Tucson-area number, (520) 626-6016, will continue to operate as they did prior to the new hotline.

The Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center also offers poison-prevention information through the UA College of Pharmacy Website at [www.pharmacy.arizona.edu](http://www.pharmacy.arizona.edu).

In addition, a new national Website also is being developed to provide poison-prevention information at: <http://www.1-800-222-1222.info/>.

When dealing with a poison emergency, don’t wait for symptoms to develop – call 1-800-222-1222 right away. The poison center experts will tell you exactly what to do. (If you have ipecac syrup or activated charcoal on hand, only use them if told to do so by the poison center experts.)

In most cases, poison situations can be handled over the phone, avoiding an expensive trip to the emergency room. If needed, the local poison center will call an ambulance for you, give treatment advice to the ambulance crew and call the local emergency department so they’re ready for your arrival.

Whether or not treatment by medical professionals is necessary, the poison center experts will follow-up with you by phone to be sure that everything is all right.

To help you be prepared for a poison emergency, the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center can send you telephone stickers or magnets with the new hotline number. Call 1-800-222-1222 with your request, and be sure to keep that number on or near your home phone, cell phone and with you when you travel this summer.

—**Jude McNally, RPh, ABAT,**  
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