



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SARATOGA COUNTY; UPSTATE NEW YORK POISON CENTER RECOGNIZE NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK; ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP TO BOLSTER POISON PREVENTION EFFORTS

BALLSTON SPA, NY -- Saratoga County Board of Supervisors today recognized National Poison Prevention Week, March 16 – 22, 2025, announcing the Saratoga County Department of Health’s partnership with Upstate New York Poison Center in the development of a dashboard that provides vital, localized poison data that organizations countywide can use for poison prevention education efforts. This partnership between Saratoga County and Upstate New York Poison Center is the first of its kind in the State.

Each year, the third week in March is dedicated to reminding families to safeguard their homes from potential poisonings and to urge everyone to save the Poison Control number, 1-800-222-1222, ahead of needing to call. During this week, the Upstate New York Poison Center renews its promise to always be prepared to help in any poisoning emergency or for a poisoning question across our 54-county coverage area 24/7, 365 days a year. In Saratoga County, officials are using this week to remind residents of the importance of poison prevention and how the poison data dashboard is helping to shape poison prevention education efforts.

Saratoga County Board of Supervisors Chairman Phil Barrett (Clifton Park) said, “Poison prevention, awareness, and education are vital components of public health and public safety that help to save lives. During National Poison Prevention Week, we are highlighting the crucial work of our Department of Health and our Sheriff’s Office as well as the importance of poison prevention efforts everyone can take. The DOH poison dashboard is an important tool in the County’s overall commitment to public health and safety that is already being used not only by county departments, but also community organizations.”

Saratoga County Department of Health Commissioner Daniel Kuhles, MD, MPH said, “Understanding poison data is essential for effective prevention efforts, helping to identify risks, track trends, and guide public health strategies to protect communities from harmful exposures. I thank Upstate New York Poison Center for sharing their call data with our epidemiologists so we can track current data on potentially harmful substances that Saratoga County residents, young and old, are exposed to and help shape poison prevention efforts.”

Saratoga County Undersheriff Jeff Brown said, “The Saratoga County Sheriff’s Office is always prepared to respond to emergencies, but poison prevention is the first line of defense and is a key aspect of public safety that everyone can take part in. During National Poison Prevention Week, I encourage everyone to check your cabinets for old or expired medications and bring them to the Saratoga County Sheriff’s Office for safe disposal. By keeping potentially harmful substances secure and understanding poisoning risks, we can all protect lives and prevent emergencies before they happen.”

(more)

"Our team is unwavering in our commitment to be a trusted resource in times of uncertainty," said Jeanna Marraffa, PharmD, MPH, Clinical Director of the Upstate New York Poison Center. "We are here 24/7 to provide accurate information and expert advice when it matters most. National Poison Prevention Week serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of poison safety and awareness. For Saratoga County residents and communities across New York, it's an opportunity to learn how to prevent poisonings and protect loved ones. Our mission is to empower and educate, making sure every call is met with the expertise and care needed to keep families safe."

Amy McBride, Executive Director of the Prevention Council of Saratoga County said, "The Saratoga County Poison Data Dashboard has been a helpful tool for our agency. We recently used this data for our campaign aimed at locking up cannabis to avoid accidental poisoning. This data helps to inform and strengthen our prevention efforts in the community."

Saratoga County Department of Health epidemiologists update the dashboard monthly, analyzing call data on exposures from harmful substances collected by Upstate New York Poison Center and identifying emerging hazards and high-risk populations in Saratoga County. This information plays a key role in spotting trends to reveal poisoning risks and exposures, such as household products, medications, or recreational marijuana, and in developing tailored and targeted education to reach the most affected populations.

The Upstate New York Poison Center serves 54 counties across New York State, providing lifesaving support and expert guidance during poisoning emergencies. The center is staffed by highly trained specialists in poison information, including nurses, pharmacists, and doctors with specialized knowledge in toxicology. In 2024, they managed over 50,000 cases, helping to manage and keep 68% of callers safely at home without needing a visit to a health care facility. There are typically between 80 and 100 calls from Saratoga County to the poison center each month resulting in more than 1,000 calls each year.

According to the Dashboard Statistics:

- Unintentional pediatric exposures to edibles are the most frequent reason for poison center calls about cannabis and have increased in recent years.
- In 2024 the top exposures to children 5 years old and under were personal care products/cosmetics; cleaning supplies; foreign bodies/toys/miscellaneous; pain medications; and vitamins.
- The top exposures to adults age 20 and older in 2024 were sedatives, pain medications, antidepressants, alcohol, and cardiovascular drugs.

Steps to Prevent Unintentional Poisonings:

Everyone can take simple yet effective actions to reduce poisoning risks at home and in their communities:

- **Store Medications and Chemicals Safely:** Keep medicines, cleaning products, recreational marijuana, and toxic substances locked up and out of reach of children and pets.
- **Read Labels Carefully:** Always follow dosing instructions for medications and heed warning labels on household products.
- **Keep Button Batteries Away from Children:** Coin-size button batteries, used in a variety of electronics, are dangerous if swallowed. Do not leave products with accessible button batteries within reach of children.
- **Dispose of Unused Medications Properly:** Use take-back programs or follow FDA guidelines for safe disposal. The Saratoga County Sheriff's Office has a drug take-back drop box, accessible 24/7, in the County Jail lobby. (6010 County Farm Road, Ballston Spa, NY).

To view the Saratoga County Poison Data Dashboard, visit www.saratogacountyny.gov/DOH.