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Subject: EPA's Campaign for National Poison Prevention Week: March 21-27

Excerpted from EPA Pesticide Program Updates from EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs 03/19/04. See free materials below. Please pass on to County 4-H staff.

EPA's Campaign for National Poison Prevention Week Advises Parents to "Lock it Up"

National Poison Prevention Week will be observed from March 21-27 to increase awareness of the danger to children of accidental poisoning from pesticides and household products. This year, EPA's childhood poison prevention campaign message is "Lock it Up," to encourage parents and caregivers to keep potentially harmful chemical products in a high cabinet out of the reach of children. U.S. poison control centers receive a call every 15 seconds about an accidental poisoning, with 40 percent of the calls involving a child under three years of age. The National Safety Council records show that over 50 percent of two million poisoning incidents each year involve children under six years of age. In most cases, children have swallowed common household substances such as prescription drugs, non-prescription pain killers, vitamins, cosmetics, and personal care and cleaning products. These poisonings also involve house plants, tobacco products, and alcohol.

National Poison Prevention Week was first authorized by Congress in 1961 with the theme, "Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons!" Many poisonings happen when adults are distracted for just a few moments by the telephone or doorbell, which is why locking chemical products up is so important. During Poison Prevention Week, local area Washington, DC, commuters can see a poster with the Lock it Up message inside the local Metro trains. Last year, EPA distributed 23,000 copies of this poster to poison centers, clinics, hospitals, and health departments. **Parents and community organizations can obtain free poison prevention materials, including the "Lock it Up" poster, "Ten Tips to Protect Children from Pesticide and Lead Poisonings," and "Poison Prevention: Read the Label First Community Action Kit," by calling EPA's Environmental Publications line at 1-800-490-9198.** Additional information on Poison Prevention Week is available on EPA's Web site at http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/cb/csb_page/updates/ppweek-lockit.htm and on the National Poison Prevention Week Council's Web site at <http://www.poisonprevention.org>.

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