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**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF POISON CONTROL CENTERS RELEASES
ONLINE QUIZ TO WARN OF SUMMER POISONING HAZARDS**

***New Nationwide Poison Center Hotline is the Resource for
Poison Emergencies and Safety Questions***

WASHINGTON, DC, June 19, 2002 – Are those mushrooms in your lawn safe to eat? Can charcoal lighter fluid really cause pneumonia? How do you know if a snake bite is poisonous? At the height of summer vacation season, poison centers in the United States answer these types of questions and respond to poison-related emergencies in more than 6,600 calls a day - a thousand more calls a day than in January.

To help families get answers to poison questions and learn more about warm weather poison hazards, the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) today released its Poison Summer Safety IQ Quiz. Available online at www.1-800-222-1222.info, the quiz includes questions about potential poisoning dangers at barbecues, while doing common yard work, on picnics and even vacationing with grandparents.

The Poison Summer Safety IQ Quiz also provides examples of the types of questions that people can get answers to by calling 1-800-222-1222, the new, nationwide poison center hotline.

"The AAPCC developed this quiz based on our experience with summer poison exposures. It contains information about real poison dangers that are common in warm weather. Many people are unaware of how serious some of these dangers can be," said AAPCC Associate Director of External Affairs and Member Services, Rose Ann G. Soloway, RN, MSED. "The AAPCC encourages people to take the quiz and to call the new national poison hotline with poison related questions. All questions are smart questions if they can save a life."

Since its official launch in January, more than 250,000 people have called 1-800-222-1222 for lifesaving information in a poison emergency or for answers to poison-related questions. Callers to the hotline are automatically connected to specially trained nurses, doctors and pharmacists at their local poison center. The free and confidential service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week for everyone in the United States.

"The new nationwide hotline is a valuable resource year-round, but in the summer months – when the risk of poison exposure increases and people are often on the move – knowing the single nationwide number is even more critical," said Soloway. "When you call 1-800-222-1222, you will get immediate, expert help, no matter where you are in the country."

The AAPCC recommends that everyone take the following steps to get immediate help for a poison emergency or to ask questions about poisons:

- Post 1-800-222-1222 near phones at home.
- Share the number with relatives and friends whose homes children may visit.
- Keep 1-800-222-1222 with you when traveling.
- Call the poison center right away if you think there has been a poisoning – or even if you have a question about a possible poison.

The Poison Summer Safety IQ Test

The Poison summer safety IQ test includes 10 questions on summer poison hazards such as mushrooms, poison ivy, snakes, garden chemicals, and sunburn cream.

Example questions are below. For a complete copy of the quiz please visit www.1-800-222-1222.info.

Question: You've hacked out some underbrush for use as fire starter in the park's charcoal grill. Is this a good idea?

- A. It's OK if your local fire marshal approves.
- B. No, because it won't taste as good as hickory or mesquite.
- C. No, if there's even a chance of poison ivy in there.

Answer: C. Smoke from burning poison ivy contains the poison ivy oils. Breathing in that smoke can cause poison ivy blisters INSIDE your nose, throat, and breathing passages. Of course, touching poison ivy can also cause poison ivy blisters on your skin. Be sure that everyone in your family knows how to recognize and avoid poison ivy. Remember, "Leaves of three, let it be". If someone touches poison ivy, immediately rinse with plenty of running water for at least five minutes. If someone has trouble breathing, call 911 or your local emergency ambulance number right away.

Question: You bought a tube of pain-relieving cream for the sunburn you got yesterday. You find your toddler sucking on the end of it. What should you do?

- A. Nothing. Even if she swallowed some, it's just a little bit.
- B. Check the tube to see if you need to buy some more.
- C. Even a little bit of these creams can be dangerous. Call the poison center right away: 1-800-222-1222!

Answer: C. Pain-relieving skin creams often contain benzocaine, dibucaine or lidocaine. A child who swallows just a small amount can have seizures. Some children have even died. If you use these medicines, be sure that you replace them in their child-resistant containers right away. Then lock them out of sight and reach of small children. If you find a child with a tube of pain-relieving skin cream, call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 right away.

Question: You are at a neighborhood barbecue. Your youngster gets into some charcoal lighter fluid and you think he might have swallowed some. Is this dangerous?

- A. No, it's just a clear liquid.
- B. It depends on how old your child is.
- C. Yes. It can easily get into the lungs and cause pneumonia. This could be fatal.

Answer: C. Drinking charcoal lighter fluid is dangerous. The same is true of other petroleum-based liquids (hydrocarbons) like gasoline, kerosene, paint thinner, baby oil, lamp oil, furniture polish, etc. When you swallow these and other hydrocarbons, they can easily go down the wrong way and get into your lungs. Only a small amount can cause pneumonia within a few hours. The liquid also spreads out over the inner surface of your lungs, preventing oxygen from entering your blood stream. Charcoal lighter fluid and other hydrocarbons MUST be stored in their original child-resistant containers, locked out of sight and reach of children. When you use these products, do not put them down where children can reach them; immediately lock them away when you're done. If someone has swallowed lighter fluid, or other possible poisons, call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 right away.

Summer Poison Safety, cont.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) is a nationwide not-for-profit organization of poison centers and others interested in the prevention and treatment of poisoning. The AAPCC manages the nationwide poison control center hotline through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The hotline is authorized and funded under the Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act (P.L. 106-174). Funding is administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration, which works in collaboration with the CDC.