

For Immediate Release:

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Toxic Effects: Ingestion of Cigarettes and Nicotine by Children

(Cass County) – In recognition of National Poison Prevention Week, March 16–22, Tobacco Free Cass County is alerting the public about tobacco and nicotine poisonings. Cigarettes and cigarette butts may poison children who ingest them. E-cigarette juices containing nicotine also pose a potential danger.

In 2013, the Nebraska Regional Poison Center received 183 calls on cigarettes or cigarette butts up from 96 calls in 2012. In 2013, they received 52 calls on e-cigarettes – up from five (5) in 2012. Many of the calls were related to children under 5 years old. Most cases of nicotine poisoning among children result from the ingestion of cigarettes or chewing tobacco. With e-cigarettes becoming more popular, young children have been known to drink e-cigarette juices – many of which have fruity flavors and aromas.

Adults who smoke in the home may not be aware of the danger of cigarettes and cigarette butts to children,” said McKinsey Mulroy, Coordinator with Tobacco Free Cass County. “Children ages 6- to 24-months old often put things into their mouths. It is very important that parents and caregivers store ALL tobacco and nicotine products out of reach of children and that they do not smoke or use e-cigarettes around children because of the associated health risks.”

“Ingestion of as little as 1 mg of nicotine by a small child can cause nausea and vomiting,” noted Mulroy “E-cigarette juices can contain 0 to 24 mgs of nicotine.”

The toxic effects of nicotine range from vomiting, nausea, lethargy, gagging, and a pale or flushed appearance to depressed respiration, cardiac arrhythmia, and convulsions. If ingestion does occur, the Nebraska Regional Poison Center should be contacted at 1-800-222-1222 to assess the toxicity risk and determine treatment.

Parents and guardians who want to quit using tobacco products can contact the free & confidential Nebraska Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or QuitNow.ne.gov.

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NAME OF YOUR COALITION/ORGANIZATION is a collaborative effort that focuses on keeping youth from starting to use tobacco, reducing access to tobacco products, and increasing awareness about the dangers of secondhand smoke. It's funded by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services/Tobacco Free Nebraska Program as a result of the tobacco master settlement agreement.