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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TOXIC CHEMICALS & HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS – WHAT’S UNDER YOUR SINK?

According to the Poison Control Center, over 10% of all toxic exposures are related to household cleaners. Many common household cleaning products that we’ve grown to trust are harmful to our health. Most consumers aren’t aware of the hidden dangers that these products present and that toxic chemicals in household cleaners are three times more likely to cause cancer than air pollution.

Dr. Gideon Koren, a pediatrician at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto says, “young children are especially vulnerable, partly because of exposure. Everything goes in their mouths and they virtually live on the floor. And young kids are more sensitive because they are still developing the basic body systems: the brain, internal organs, respiratory and immune systems are not fully developed until adolescence. How can we, as one of the most advanced countries in the world, allow these to enter our household with small children.”

The average household contains anywhere from 3-25 gallons of toxic materials, most of which are cleaners. No law requires manufacturers to list ingredients on their labels or to test the safety of these products. Some products list a toll-free 1-800 phone number on their packages to find out exactly what is in their products.

You can also find more information on most commonly used ingredients used in every day products by going to the NIH (National Institute of Health) website. For example, Lye-Potassium Hydroxide is harmful if swallowed or inhaled, can cause severe eye and skin burns, respiratory and digestive burns, and repeated contact can cause dermatitis. This ingredient is found in many household cleaners and many health and beauty products.

There are alternatives to keeping your house clean and reducing your family’s risk.

- The first step towards a safer cleaning regimen is to read the labels on your cleaning products.
- Research the chemicals listed through the Household Products Database (www.householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov), the Cosmetics Database (www.toxnet.nlm.nih.gov), and Scorecard (www.scorecard.org).
- Avoid products with fragrances.
- Use homemade, non-toxic cleaning solutions made from common ingredients such as vinegar, baking soda, washing soda, lemon juice, and borax, found on sites such as www.eartheasy.com.
- Purchase solutions that bear the Green Seal logo.

Take a greener approach to cleaning and know you have helped to protect yourself and your family.

In case of an accidental poisoning, immediately contact the Northern New England Poison Control Hotline at 1-800-222-1222.