



Minnesota Poison Control System

www.mnpoison.org

Effective Presentation Tips

- **Know your audience**

The more you know about your audience, the better prepared you will be. You should modify your program to your audience's specific needs and interests. Establish what your audience already knows about poisoning so you can modify your messages. Learning will occur when you build on what your audience already knows. In addition, make sure the information you are presenting is age appropriate. For example, when teaching children, keep words simple and ideas concise and to the point.

- **Know your subject matter**

Knowledge gives you confidence. It is important to review your manual and be prepared! In addition, memorize your introduction. The first two minutes of your presentation are the most important. Your audience may remember nothing more than what you say in the beginning and end of your presentation so make them memorable! (See *Preparing an Introduction* in the Tips section of the Resource Center for more details).

- **Speak, do not read**

Be familiar with your material so you do not have to read from your outline and/or notes. Be sure to speak clearly, loudly, and enthusiastically. Ask your audience early in your program if you are speaking loud enough. Maintain eye contact. This gives you authority from the audience's perspective.

- **Use appropriate body language**

Smile! Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication. You must appear honest and inviting to your audience. For example, if someone asks a question, open and extend your arm with your palm facing up to acknowledge the individual. Do not motion to people with your head or point. Do not cross your arms in front of you or stand behind a podium. These actions send negative messages to your audience and you will lose credibility. Maintain eye contact to keep your audience's attention.

- **Make it interesting**

Use different methods of presentation to keep your audience's attention. Examples of methods include: Lectures, discussions, stories/case studies, role playing, videos, PowerPoint, displays, group interaction, humor (when appropriate), and repetition.

- **Slice of life**

Talk about real life poisoning cases and their outcomes. Use vivid descriptions and illustrate your story. This appeals to the emotions and draws your audience in.

- **Involve your audience**

Ask your audience to share their stories about poisoning. Interact with your audience members by asking them questions and encouraging them to partake in the discussion. In addition, provide



Minnesota Poison Control System

www.mnpoison.org

a copy of the outline from PowerPoint slides and encourage your audience to take notes. Writing requires us to think and process. This improves learning.

Remember the saying:

*What I hear, I forget;
What I see, I remember;
but what I do, I understand.*

- **Summarize, Summarize, Summarize**

Remember to summarize and reinforce key points throughout your program. Allow enough time at the end of your program to recap key points and for the audience to ask questions.