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**MEDIA ALERT: STAY SAFE THIS COLD AND FLU SEASON: EXPERTS SHARE ESSENTIAL MEDICATION SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS**

**Oklahoma Poison Center Urges Caution with Over-the-Counter Medications for Children**

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – As coughs and sniffles sweep through homes this cold and flu season, the Oklahoma Poison Center, a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy, is reminding parents that the wrong medicine, or even the wrong dose, can do more harm than good. Experts are on hand to ensure families have the right information to keep children safe.

“Giving the wrong dose or adult medications to children can lead to dangerous consequences,” says Kristie Edelen, managing director of the Oklahoma Poison Center. “Even if you try to adjust an adult dose, it can still be too much for a child’s body to handle.” The Oklahoma Poison Center advises parents to turn to trusted experts when in doubt.

Over-the-counter medications, including cough and cold remedies, are not recommended for children under age 4, and should only be used in children ages 4-6 if specifically advised by a doctor. This year alone, the Oklahoma Poison Center has already received 567 calls related to cold and cough medications, with 224 of those calls (40%) involving children aged 0-5 years. These numbers highlight the importance of proper medication safety, as young children are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of incorrect dosing or ingesting adult medications. Parents and caregivers are urged to be vigilant and seek expert guidance to avoid these preventable incidents. The Oklahoma Poison Center is ready to assist with any questions about medication safety and ensure that families have the support they need during this winter season.

**Key Tips for Parents:**

* **Correct Dosing Matters**: Always follow the instructions on the medication packaging or consult with your doctor or pharmacist for advice on dosing. You can also call the Oklahoma Poison Center for dosing information. Our phones are staffed by pharmacists 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
* **Use the Right Tools**: Never use regular kitchen spoons to measure medication. Kitchen spoons can be inaccurate and lead to overdosing or underdosing. Be sure to use the dosing cup or syringe that came with the medication. If a medication does not come with a dosing device, ask your pharmacist for one.
* **Call for Help**: Unsure about the right medicine or dosage? Pharmacists and nurses at the Oklahoma Poison Center are available 24/7 to help you with any questions.

If you can’t find the cold and flu medicine you need, don’t panic – ask your pharmacist for alternatives or call the Oklahoma Poison Center for guidance. Your child’s safety is our priority, and we’re here to provide the support you need.

**Important Contact Information:**

* Oklahoma Poison Center Helpline: **(800) 222-1222**
* Available **24/7**
* For more tips and information, visit: [www.oklahomapoison.org](http://www.oklahomapoison.org)

Stay safe, stay informed, and keep your family healthy during this cough and cold season!

**The Oklahoma Poison Center** is committed to keeping families safe in this cough and cold season and beyond. By staying informed and taking a few simple precautions, you can help prevent medication errors. For more information on poisoning prevention and safety tips, visit [oklahomapoison.org](http://oklahomapoison.org).

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**About Oklahoma Poison Center**

Oklahoma Poison Center is dedicated to providing expert advice and support in cases of poisoning and exposure to harmful substances. Our mission is to prevent poisonings and reduce their impact through education, prevention, and providing emergency treatment recommendations. The Oklahoma Poison Center is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy.

**The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences**

The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences is one of the nation’s few academic health centers with colleges in all health professions— allied health, dentistry, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, public health, and graduate studies. OU Health Sciences serves approximately 4,000 students in more than 70 undergraduate and graduate degree programs on campuses in Oklahoma City and Tulsa and is the academic and research partner of OU Health, the state’s only comprehensive academic healthcare system. OU Health Sciences is ranked 129 out of over 2,849 institutions in funding received from the National Institutes of Health, according to the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research. For more information, visit ouhsc.edu.