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**COLD AND FLU SEASON BRINGS COUGHS AND SNIFFLES: EXPERTS ARE AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE DOSING FOR OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION IN CHILDREN**

***Tips Provided by the Oklahoma Poison Center***

OKLAHOMA CITY - It’s difficult to see your child struggling with a cough or cold, but giving the wrong medicine, or too much medicine, can make a small problem much worse. The Oklahoma Poison Center warns parents that adult doses, even if reduced, can be extremely harmful to children. This message comes as national reports of shortages of children’s cold, cough, and fever medication continue due to high demand. “Over-the-counter cough and cold medicines are not recommended for children under the age of four and should be used only if recommended by a doctor in children four to six years old,” says Kristie Edelen, Pharm D, DABAT, Assistant Managing Director of the Oklahoma Poison Center. “Children are dosed very differently than adults. Most over-the-counter medications are based on a child’s weight, and you can’t match the right dosage by cutting an adult dose” says Edelen.

With cold and flu season in full swing, if you can’t find the medication you need on the shelves, ask your pharmacist, or call the Oklahoma Poison Center to see if there is an alternative. To avoid an overdose or mishap, you can call the pharmacists available at the Oklahoma Poison Center for medication dosing information or if you have questions about medications. Remember to use only the dosing spoon or syringe that comes with a medication, and never use a spoon from the silverware drawer in your kitchen when giving medications. Kitchen spoons are not intended to be used in giving a child medication, as it can result in giving too much or too little medication.

An inaccurate dose of over-the-counter medication may cause side effects and potentially harmful effects to children, so never hesitate to contact a pharmacist at the Oklahoma Poison Center if you have questions prior to giving your child a dose of over-the-counter medication. Pharmacists and registered nurses at the Oklahoma Poison Center are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (800) 222-1222. Please do not email the Oklahoma Poison Center or a member of the Oklahoma Poison Center staff, as poisoning emergencies are not handled through email. The Oklahoma Poison Center is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy at the OU Health Sciences Center. For more information, log on to www.oklahomapoison.org.