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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Grill, Chill, and Refill—Safely: Summer Safety Tips from the Oklahoma Poison Center**

OKLAHOMA CITY (July 1, 2025) — Fire up the grill, light the sparklers, and pass the potato salad—but don’t let a summer celebration end with a trip to the emergency department. As Oklahomans gear up for backyard barbecues, fireworks shows, and long holiday weekends, the Oklahoma Poison Center is urging families to stay alert to some common—but easily preventable—warm-weather hazards.

“Summer is made for fun, but every year we see cookouts and celebrations take a toxic turn,” said Kristie Edelen, board-certified clinical toxicologist and managing director of the Oklahoma Poison Center. “From food left out too long to children sipping from the wrong cup, these are real risks that can put a damper on summer fun. A quick call to the Poison Center can often prevent an emergency department trip—or worse.”

Here are some of the top summer safety tips from the Oklahoma Poison Center:

**Keep It Cool—Literally**

Bacteria multiply quickly in the summer heat. Foods like mayo-based salads, undercooked meats, and dairy dishes can cause serious foodborne illnesses if not properly chilled or cooked. When in doubt, throw it out.

**Watch Those Drinks**

Alcoholic beverages, fruity cocktails, and “spiked” popsicles may look and taste appealing to young children. Store drinks up high and away from curious hands. Even small amounts can cause dangerous drops in blood sugar or slowed breathing in kids.

**Grill Smarter**

Lighter fluid, charcoal starters, and propane can pose serious poisoning risks if swallowed or inhaled. Never store these products near food or drinks, and keep them in their original containers to avoid confusion.

**Spray Safe**

Bug sprays, citronella candles, and sunscreen are summer staples—but using them incorrectly can lead to eye irritation, skin reactions, or even poisoning. Apply repellent and sunscreen separately, wash hands after use, and never spray near food or open flames.

**Fireworks and Sparklers: Pretty but Perilous**

Even “kid-friendly” fireworks like sparklers burn hot enough to cause third-degree burns—but the danger doesn’t stop there. Many fireworks are brightly colored, sweet-smelling, or resemble candy, making them especially tempting for young children to touch or even taste. Fireworks contain heavy metals and toxic chemicals that can be harmful if swallowed. Always keep fireworks locked away from children and never leave them unattended, even after the show.

Quick Tip: The Oklahoma Poison Center is available 24/7 for fast, expert help. Whether you’re worried about food safety, accidental ingestions, or chemical exposures, call 1-800-222-1222 for free, confidential advice.

“We want Oklahomans to enjoy every minute of summer—without any dangerous detours,” Edelen said. “A two-minute call to the Poison Center can turn a potential emergency into a safe memory.”

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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 all health professions colleges — Allied Health, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, Graduate Studies and School of Community Medicine. 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.