Contact: Kristie Edelen, Pharm.D., DABAT

Managing Director, Oklahoma Poison Center

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences College of Pharmacy

Phone: (405) 271-5062

Email: kristie-edelen@ouhsc.edu

Website: oklahomapoison.org

**Oklahoma Poison Center Urges Residents to Be Prepared During Poison Prevention Week**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Every 8 minutes, someone in Oklahoma calls the Poison Helpline for lifesaving advice. With unintentional poisonings on the rise, Governor Kevin Stitt has officially proclaimed March 16-22, 2025, as Oklahoma Poison Prevention Week to highlight the critical role of poison prevention in protecting families, children, and seniors across the state.

The Oklahoma Poison Center, which provides free, 24/7 expert medical guidance to all Oklahomans, is calling on residents to be proactive, be informed, and be prepared. From accidental medication overdoses to venomous bites, poisoning emergencies can happen to anyone—but knowing what to do can save a life.

**A Hidden Danger in Every Home**  
Poisoning remains the leading cause of injury-related death in Oklahoma, surpassing car accidents and gun-related injuries. In 2024 alone, the Oklahoma Poison Center managed over 30,000 poisoning cases, helping prevent unnecessary emergency room visits and saving lives.

"Every second counts in a poisoning emergency," said Kristie Edelen, Managing Director of the Oklahoma Poison Center. "Whether it's a child swallowing household cleaner, a senior misreading medication labels, or someone bitten by a rattlesnake, our specialists are here to provide fast, expert guidance—often preventing serious harm or even death."

**Who’s at Risk? Everyone.**  
Many Oklahomans are unaware that common household items—like cleaning products, pesticides, and even personal care products—can pose serious risks if misused. Meanwhile, opioid overdoses, medication errors, and dangerous interactions remain a major concern.

"As pharmacists and healthcare professionals, we see firsthand how preventable poisoning incidents can be," said Dean Melissa Medina, Dean of the College of Pharmacy at the University of Oklahoma. "By educating the public and ensuring easy access to expert poison center services, we can help protect Oklahomans and prevent unnecessary medical emergencies."

**What Oklahomans Can Do During Poison Prevention Week:**

* Save the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222) in your phone—it could save a life.
* Store medications, cleaning products, and chemicals securely, out of reach of children.
* Read and follow labels carefully—many poisonings happen due to accidental misuse.
* Be aware of local poisoning risks—from venomous snake bites in rural areas to carbon monoxide poisoning in winter months.
* Call the Poison Help line first—before rushing to the ER. Expert guidance is free, fast, and could prevent unnecessary medical visits.

**Help Is Only a Call Away**

Unlike online searches that can lead to misinformation, the Oklahoma Poison Center provides accurate, science-based medical guidance in real time. Trained specialists, including doctors, nurses, and pharmacists, are available 24/7 at 1-800-222-1222.

**Join Us in Spreading Awareness**  
Oklahoma Poison Prevention Week is an opportunity for families, schools, and communities to take simple steps that could prevent a tragedy. The Oklahoma Poison Center encourages media outlets, educators, and community leaders to help spread the message: Poisonings are preventable, and help is always available.

###

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.