OKLAHOMA POISON CENTER REPORTS SPIKE IN POISONINGS WITH SELF-HARM INTENT AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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Oklahoma City - The Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information reports a spike in poisonings among adolescent girls. During the first ten days of February the poison center saw an alarming 51 cases, over twice as many as compared to the previous ten-day period. While the types of medication taken varied, many included over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and acetaminophen. These medicines are common in most households, and the accessibility can make them easy to take in large amounts.

Seeing an increase in the number of cases and the severity of exposures in Oklahoma is concerning. Scott Schaeffer, managing director of the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information, reported that the jump in exposures mirrors alarming reports of an increase in self-harm attempts reported by poison centers across the country. “An additional issue is that many people don’t know that taking too much of an OTC pain reliever can have life-threatening consequences,” said Schaeffer.

The poison center encourages continued conversations in communities about medication safety and depression.

* Families and care givers should keep medications, including over the counter pain relievers, locked up and away.
* Teach adolescents how to properly take OTC medications.
* Have a family conversation about the dangers of misusing medications.
* Remove old or unnecessary medications from the home.
* Safely dispose of unwanted or expired medications.
* Take threats and discussions about self-harm seriously.

If you are depressed or in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention lifeline 24 hours a day at 800-273-8255. Call the Poison Center with any questions or concerns regarding medications, and don’t forget to text “POISON” to 797979 to have the Oklahoma Poison Center number easily saved to your cell phone.

Pharmacists and registered nurses at the Poison Center are available 24 hours a day seven days a week at (800) 222-1222. Please do not email the Poison Center or members of the Poison Center staff, as poisoning emergencies are not handled through email.

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