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OREGON POISON CENTER REMINDS PARENTS, CAREGIVERS TO LOCK UP POISONS, NEVER LEAVE THEM UNATTENDED

March 21-27 is National Poison Prevention Week

PORTLAND, Ore. -- Some 30 children die annually from accidental poisonings. To prevent these tragic deaths, the Oregon Poison Center at Oregon Health & Science University would like to remind parents and caregivers to keep medicines and cleaners locked up and out of sight.

"Many poisonings happen when adults are distracted for just a few minutes, either by the telephone, the doorbell or something else," said Tonya Drayden, R.N., public education coordinator for the Oregon Poison Center. "It only takes a few minutes for a small child to grab and swallow something that could be poisonous."

"Children Act Fast ... So Do Poisons," is the theme for this year's National Poison Prevention Week, and poison centers nationwide are raising awareness of the dangers of unintentional poisonings.

Common poisons children may try to eat or drink include: vitamins with iron, pain or fever relievers, cough and cold preparations, pills for depression and heart disease, toilet cleaners and drain openers, laundry detergent, bleach, kerosene, gasoline, lamp oils, antifreeze, and windshield washer fluids.

To prevent accidental poisonings, the Oregon Poison Center recommends these tips:

- Buy products with child-resistant caps. Child-resistant caps are not CHILD-PROOF. Once your child learns how to open them, they will not keep your child safe.
- Tightly close caps after each use.
- Keep medicine and cleaners out of sight in cabinets with child-resistant latches.
- If the phone or doorbell rings while using medicine or cleaner, cap it before you answer.
- Don't put poison in empty food bottles -- someone might eat it.
- Clean up after working around the house, car and garden. Properly dispose of left-over cleaners, sprays and kerosene right away.
- Old, expired medicines can poison children -- throw them out.
- Buy poisons that have a bittering agent. If it tastes bad, children may stop eating it.

The Oregon Poison Center is a certified regional poison center providing 24-hour poison information and patient management assistance to callers in Oregon, northern Nevada and Alaska. In 2003 the center received more than 70,000 calls, 50 percent of which

involved care for children aged 5 or younger. If you think someone has been poisoned from a medicine or household chemical, call the Oregon Poison Center at 800 222-1222.

For more information about the Oregon Poison Center, visit www.oregonpoison.com

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