



Canadian Association of
Poison Control Centres

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Preventing a parent’s nightmare – unintentional poisoning of your child **Parents urged to keep medications and other potential poisons** *Locked Out of Reach*

TORONTO (March 21, 2011) – Kathleen Wong was frantic when her three-year-old daughter Kiana took a nibble from one of her grandfather’s diabetes tablets. “We were visiting my father and he had put his medication out on the counter to take later,” recalls Kathleen. “My daughter got up on a chair near the counter and took a bite of one of the pills.” (To read more about Kathleen’s experience with unintentional poisoning, visit www.safekidscanada.ca)

This type of incident happens more frequently than you might think. “Poison Control Centres across Canada receive about 160,000 phone calls each year,” reports Dr. Martin Laliberté, President, Canadian Association of Poison Control Centres (CAPCC). “About 43 per cent of those calls are from frantic parents involving children younger than six years old.

“If you think your child has been poisoned, immediately contact the nearest poison control centre or call 911,” adds Laliberté. “More than 70 per cent of cases can be treated successfully at home.”

Each year an estimated five Canadian children under 14 die and another 1,280 end up in the hospital with serious injuries due to poisoning. During Poison Prevention Week, March 20 to 26, the CAPCC, Health Canada and Safe Kids Canada are reminding parents and caregivers about the dangers of unintentional poisoning and encouraging them to keep medications and other potential poisons *Locked Out of Reach*.

Younger children are curious by nature and explore their environment by touching and putting everything they find in their mouths. “Medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, are involved in two-thirds of unintentional poisonings in children under 14,” says Pamela Fuselli, Executive Director of Safe Kids Canada, “but household cleaners, garden chemicals, personal care products, plants and art supplies are other common causes of poisoning.”

“Unintentional poisoning is a common cause of preventable injury to children in Canada,” said the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health. “Protecting the health and safety of children is a key priority for this government and with initiatives like National Poison Prevention Week, we are urging parents and caregivers to learn and adopt basic poison prevention techniques in the home.”

To help keep your child safe from poisoning, keep all medications and potential poisons in their original containers and locked in a cabinet or box, out of reach. Be sure to keep the phone number of your local poison control centre by your home phone and enter it into your cell phone and home phone contact lists.

For more information on unintentional poisoning and for tips on how to prevent them, please visit the websites for Safe Kids Canada (www.safekidscanada.ca), Health Canada (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/house-domes/chem-chim/hazard-danger-eng.php>) and the Canadian Association of Poison Control Centres, www.capcc.ca ; where you can find a list of poison control centres.

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For more information, or to set up an interview, please contact:

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