

Atrium Health Navicent Beverly Knight Olson Children's Hospital Urges Caregivers to be Aware of Toxic Household Items

National Poison Prevention Week observed March 19-25, 2023

MACON, Ga., March 21, 2023 – Atrium Health Navicent Beverly Knight Olson Children's Hospital encourages the community to use National Poison Prevention Week, observed March 19-25, 2023, as an opportunity to take note of potentially deadly household substances that could cause harm to children.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), poisoning is the leading cause of unintentional injury-related deaths in the U.S. In 2020, 87,404 people died as a result of poisoning. Household products such as cleaning agents, personal care and topical products, and pesticides are among the top 10 substances responsible for poisoning exposures annually.

In 2020, the 55 U.S. poison control centers provided telephone guidance for over 2.1 million poison exposures. While children under 6 years old comprise the majority of cases, poisoning affects all age groups. The highest incidence occurs in 1- and 2-year-olds.

Across all ages, 76.9 percent of poison exposures reported to U.S. poison centers in 2020 were unintentional. Most poisonings occur when parents or caregivers are home but not paying attention. Atrium Health Navicent Beverly Knight Olson Children's Hospital physicians caution that accidental ingestion of regular household substances such as certain plants, lawn fertilizers, alcohol and cleaning products including bleach, laundry and dishwasher detergents can lead to poisoning.

"Unfortunately, ingestion of common household products is extremely common. With certain household products or prescription and over-the-counter medication, even a small amount can lead to an adverse outcome," said Dr. Stephanie Gilman, an Atrium Health Navicent pediatric specialist. "Keep household cleaning products and medication out of reach from children, and do not keep household products in cabinets under the sink."

Follow these tips to keep children safe from accidental poisoning:

- Store medicine, cleaning and laundry products, paints and pesticides in their original packaging in locked cabinets, out of sight and reach of children.
- Do not give children adult medicine and ask your child's pediatrician before giving him or her any medicine that is not prescribed for them.
- Safety latches that automatically lock when you close a cabinet door can help keep children away from dangerous products, but there is always a chance the device will malfunction.
- Purchase and keep all medicines in containers with safety caps. Discard unused medication. Never refer to medicine as "candy" or another appealing name.
- Check the label each time you give a child medicine to ensure proper dosage. For liquid medicines, use the dosing device that came with the medicine.
- If you use an e-cigarette, keep the liquid nicotine refills locked and out of children's reach and only buy refills that use child-resistant packaging. A small amount of liquid nicotine spilled on the skin or swallowed can be fatal to a child.
- Maintain working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Secure remote controls, key fobs, musical children's books and other devices that may contain small batteries, which can cause injury if ingested.
- Know the names of all plants in your home and yard. If you have young children or pets, consider removing those that are poisonous.

If you suspect your child has been poisoned, it's important to get help right away. Some signs that indicate your child may have been poisoned include lethargy, an altered mental status, shallow breathing, diarrhea and changes in their pupils. If your child is experiencing any of those symptoms, take them to an emergency room right away.

The Pediatric Emergency Center at Atrium Health Navicent Beverly Knight Olson Children's Hospital is available 24 hours a day if poison exposure occurs. Designed specifically for children and families, the children's hospital, located at 888 Pine Street in Macon, is staffed by board-certified pediatric specialists.

Caregivers are encouraged to prepare for poison emergencies by programming the national Poison Helpline (1-800-222-1222) into their phones and posting the phone number in a visible location. Health care professionals at the Poison Helpline are available 24 hours a day to answer questions.

For more information about children's services, visit <https://childrenshospitalnh.org/>.

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the fifth-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

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