

## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

# Alberta Blue Cross® and the Injury Prevention Centre raise awareness of National Poison Prevention Week

National Poison Prevention Week is March 16 to 22, and Alberta Blue Cross and the Injury Prevention Centre are partnering again to raise awareness of the dangers of medication poisoning in young children.

“Annually, Alberta Poison and Drug Information Services receives more than 8,000 calls relating to children aged 0 to 5 years old,” states Dr. Kathy Belton, director of the Injury Prevention Centre based in the University of Alberta’s School of Public Health. “That’s approximately 22 calls a day.”

While prevention is the main protection against poisoning, accidents still happen. If you fear yourself or someone else has been poisoned, contact Canada’s toll-free number for poison centres at 1-844-POISON-X (1-844-764-7669). This number is available 24/7 and is the main contact for Albertans who suspect a poisoning.

When unsure if a child is poisoned, it is essential to consult a medical professional immediately. Half of poisonings to children 0 to 5 years old treated in Alberta children’s hospitals are related to medication with more than a third of these cases involving common pain relievers like acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

“This week is a wake-up call to parents with young children as well as caregivers, grandparents and anyone who is around children to be extra-vigilant in taking steps to prevent accidental medication poisonings among children,” says Brian Geislinger, senior vice-president of Corporate Relations and Community Engagement with Alberta Blue Cross. “Your mindfulness can avert a potential tragedy.”

To avoid medication poisoning in young children, prevention is key.

- Use proper language. Never call medicine “candy,” and educate children on the risks of taking too much medicine or medicine without a parent or caregiver’s knowledge.
- Look around. Never leave medications unattended on bedside tables, kitchen counters or anywhere easily accessible to children. Be aware of medication visitors may have in their purses, coat pockets and bags and keep them out of children’s reach.
- Store medication securely. Child-resistant containers are not child proof. Lock up medicine, vitamins and other potentially poisonous items—like household cleaning supplies and cannabis products—in cupboards or boxes.
- Give the correct dose and store correctly. This information is on the prescription label, medicine container or packaging. Avoid using more than 1 medicine containing acetaminophen or ibuprofen at a time.
- If you have any questions or concerns about a medicine, talk to a pharmacist or your health care provider.

Alberta Blue Cross and the Injury Prevention Centre have a long-standing partnership to support the wellness of Albertans through injury prevention education, including Alberta Blue Cross sponsoring the Injury Prevention Centre's Fall Prevention campaign.

For more information on medication poisoning prevention and free, downloadable resources, [visit the Injury Prevention Centre website](#).

### **About Alberta Blue Cross**

As the largest provider of health benefits in Alberta, we believe we have the potential and responsibility to impact people's lives for the better. We believe all communities should thrive, and we are committed to serving as a champion for wellness by promoting the health of Albertans.

### **About Injury Prevention Centre**

The Injury Prevention Centre has supported organizations, communities and individuals to take actions to reduce their risk of injury for over 25 years in Alberta. By focusing on preventing injuries, we save lives and keep Albertans out of emergency rooms and hospital beds. We work as connectors, providers and leaders committed to our vision of ensuring that "Albertans work and play hard, free from life-limiting injuries."

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