FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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 19, 2012) – A 10-month old is found crying in a puddle of laundry detergent, having rubbed his eyes and put his hands into his mouth. A two-year-old discovers some nicotine-replacement gum in her dad’s coat pocket and has chewed a couple of pieces. A three-year-old swallows one of grandpa’s diabetes tablets, momentarily left out on the breakfast table.

These are the scenes of a parent’s nightmare, but they happen in real life, every day, in homes across the country. Fortunately, most of these incidences can be prevented.

“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 19 to 25, 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 unfortunately a common cause of injury in Canada,” said the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health. “Protecting the health and safety of children is a key priority for our 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 (www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/init/kids-enfants/inj-prev-bless/poison-empoisonnements/index-eng.php) and the Canadian Association of Poison Control Centres, www.capcc.ca; where you can find a list of poison control centres.

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

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