**Quick Action Key to Managing a Mushroom Poisoning**

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OKLAHOMA CITY – It can be difficult to tell the difference between a poisonous mushroom and one that is safe to eat. Because proper identification can occasionally baffle even experienced mushroom hunters, the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information recommends treating all wild mushroom exposures as potentially dangerous. Quick reaction to any wild mushroom ingestion is the key to successful treatment of poisoning.

There are many incorrect tips regarding how to tell whether a mushroom is poisonous. Having bright flashy colors, a horrible taste and smell, or being safe if cooked long enough are just a few of the mistaken beliefs. Prevention is the best defense against mushroom poisoning. If you find a mushroom growing in your yard, remove it and place it in the trash. Though some mushrooms can be poisonous if eaten, they are not poisonous if touched while removing them from the lawn.

“Most calls received at the center are from parents whose young children have sampled a wild mushroom found in the back yard. Many children will develop nausea and vomiting within six hours of eating a mushroom. Other early symptoms may include stomach cramps and diarrhea,” said Scott Schaeffer, managing director of the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information.

It takes longer for symptoms to develop with some of the most poisonous mushrooms, which can cause liver or kidney problems. Good medical care is essential for treatment of poisoning due to these types of mushrooms. There is no antidote available for mushroom poisoning, though some medicines may be helpful in limiting liver damage. If you suspect that someone has eaten a mushroom, call the Oklahoma Poison Center right away.

* Do not wait for symptoms to occur; the victim may need to be taken to an emergency room for observation and treatment.
* Collect the remainder of any mushrooms, including the base, which may be buried in the ground. If there is more than one variety at the location, collect a sample of each.
* Place the mushroom in a paper bag, basket or open container. The samples should be kept cool, but do not freeze them and do not use plastic containers or plastic bags, which cause mushrooms to spoil. Take the mushrooms with you to the emergency room.
* If the victim has vomited, collect the vomited material, which may assist in proper identification of the mushroom.

Pharmacists and registered nurses at the poison center are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (800) 222-1222. Please do not email the poison center or a member of the poison center staff, as poisoning emergencies are not handled through email. The Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy at the OU Health Sciences Center. For more information, log on to [www.oklahomapoison.org](http://www.oklahomapoison.org).

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