

[This memo and a copy of the September/October 2003 issue of Safe Medicine, ISMP's newsletter for consumers, was sent to approximately to 200 parenting and women's publications and online media outlets.]

October 29, 2003

Dear Member of the Media:

Every year, the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP) receives reports of **infants and children receiving accidental overdoses of acetaminophen (Tylenol)**. Misuse of acetaminophen can lead to liver damage and death, yet parents, child care providers, and even some medical professionals may not always take into account the fact that there are different dosage strengths available on the market and check doses before administration, putting children at risk for serious errors.

Infant acetaminophen drops are concentrated, about three times stronger than children's liquid acetaminophen, which may lead to confusion and mistakes. As we enter flu and cold season, please help ISMP spread the word that parents and health care practitioners need to be alert to the different acetaminophen dosage strengths when administering this common children's medication. It is also important to know that aspirin is not always a suitable alternative for children who have fever, headaches, or other signs of a virus infection, especially the flu or chickenpox--administering products that contain aspirin to children with viral infections can lead to Reye's syndrome.

Enclosed is a copy of the September/October issue of ISMP's newsletter for health care consumers, *Safe Medicine*, which contains a front-page article on acetaminophen overdose and tips on how to prevent tragedies of this kind from occurring. For more information and resources on medication safety, medical professionals and parents can visit ISMP's web site, www.ismp.org.

Please contact ISMP media relations at 704-321-3343 or rbrehio@carolina.rr.com to arrange interviews or to receive a complimentary media subscription to ISMP's medication safety newsletters.

Sincerely,

Renée Brehio

Media Relations

Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP)

Enclosure

ISMP is a nonprofit organization that works closely with health care practitioners, consumers, hospitals, regulatory agencies and professional organizations to provide education about preventing medication errors. ISMP is recognized as the premier international resource in all matters pertaining to safe medication practices in health care organizations.