

# SEPTEMBER

## What is Reye's Syndrome?

Reye's Syndrome is a disease which affects all organs of the body, but most fatally the liver and the brain. Reye's syndrome is a two-phase illness because it is almost always associated with a previous viral infection, such as influenza (flu), cold or Chicken Pox. Reye's Syndrome is not contagious and the cause is unknown. It is often misdiagnosed as illnesses such as, meningitis, diabetes or drug overdose. Although cases are reported year round, Reye's Syndrome tends to appear with greatest frequency during January, February, and March when influenza is most common.

### THE ROLE OF ASPIRIN

Research has shown an association of the development of Reye's Syndrome and the use of aspirin (a salicylate compound) for treating the symptoms of influenza-like illnesses, chicken pox, colds, etc. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) does not recommend giving aspirin or combination products containing aspirin to children, especially when fever is present, unless directed by your Pediatrician. It is possible to develop Reye's syndrome without taking aspirin; however the chances of its development can be decreased by not giving aspirin to individuals without first consulting a physician for each specific use. Anti-nausea medications, such as Pepto-Bismol® may also contain salicylates and may disguise the symptoms of Reye's Syndrome.

### KEEP IN MIND

- Use caution when taking over the counter medications containing aspirin, salicylate compounds or wintergreen oil.
- Some medication labels may use the words acetylsalicylate, acetylsalicylic, phenyl salicylates, etc. instead of aspirin.
- Products ingredients may change on occasion so always check the label.

When in doubt check with your physician, pharmacist or call the **Georgia Poison Center** at 404.616.9000 in the Atlanta metro area or 1.800.222.1222 outside Atlanta.

September is Reye's Syndrome Awareness Month

September 18-24, 2005 is Reye's Syndrome Awareness Week.

