A.M. routine distraction nearly leads to disaster

Most parents would recognize Illinois Poison Control as a phone number to have on hand in case of an emergency. After all, little ones can get into any number of things in that phase where everything that goes into the hand goes into the mouth.

That’s probably why most moms I know live in a constant state of angst, lest they turn their back for a second and suddenly Junior has decided that something toxic looks like a treat.

Yet, sometimes Illinois Poison Control can be a good resource for adults, too. I learned that on New Year’s Day, I’m a little embarrassed to admit.

The night before had not ushered out the old year with a bang. In fact, Team Oliver went to bed before midnight. I was more than ready to put the old year to bed and start fresh in a new year.

After sleeping in a few extra minutes, we got up to start the day.

I wouldn’t say I have an elaborate routine in the morning, but I do have a set sequence for how I approach things. Harriet the cat must be petted as she drinks her water, then I set out Tony’s medications. I set out mine on a separate counter. I feed the cat, then I pour our coffee and bring Tony’s into the living room. I go back and take my pills and then I bring my coffee into the living room. Usually there’s another round of petting for Harriet.

This happens every day without fail. Except for Wednesday.

Somehow, as I was preoccupied with worrying about starting a new medication that night, the autopilot of my morning was hijacked.

I suppose I was trying to be helpful when I went to the refrigerator to get some water for Tony to go along with his cholesterol, Alzheimer’s and allergy pills. My plan was to put the water onto the table.

As I found myself walking back to the refrigerator with the water, I realized I had made a big mistake.

I looked back at the table in horror. Tony’s pills weren’t there. I looked around the corner where mine usually are. They still were there.

I had accidentally taken Tony’s medications! Now what?

I immediately thought about Illinois Poison Control. Then I tried to talk myself out of it. Surely I would be fine. After a few minutes of internal debate, I went to do an internet search about the medications I had just accidentally ingested.

They didn’t come up, but another of Tony’s drugs did, along with a box containing Illinois Poison Control’s phone number. The magic words for me were “Don’t guess, know for sure.”

So I grabbed my phone, swallowed my pride and made the call. I explained to the nice woman Connie what had happened.

She assured me that this sort of thing happens far more than most people would think and that I was going to be OK. She looked at how Tony’s medications would interact with mine, and checked on that new drug I was so worried about starting later in the day.

She even took my phone number so that she could call me a few hours later to make sure I was all right, which she did.

Stressed-out caregivers might want to write this number down and store it in a cell-phone: 1-800-222-1222. You can even get to them through their website, illinoispoison-center.org.

Of course, if you or someone else is having trouble breathing or is unconscious, call 911 first.

The website also has a lot of helpful information about how to prevent accidents.

What a relief to know that there was someone to call when my angst was getting the best of me.

Now I just need to make a resolution to pay better attention.

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