



# Poison Prevention

Newsletter

September 2016

UPSTATE  
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

## Venomous Snakes

While New York is home to several species of venomous snakes, most people will probably never see one.

Distinguishing a venomous snake from a harmless one can be difficult. One characteristic many look for is the presence of a pit between the nostril and the eye, but if you don't know how to identify snake species and you're close enough to see the pit, you're too close. A second characteristic to look for is the shape of a snake's head. Venomous snakes have broadly triangular heads; however, this characteristic can be deceiving because many of the non-venomous species can flatten and widen their heads when provoked, giving their heads a triangular appearance as well. If you're in doubt, leave the snake alone. It will most likely move off in a different direction.

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## Back To School Poison Safety

**AAPCC IS REMINDING STUDENTS, TEACHERS, SCHOOL NURSES, AND PARENTS ABOUT SOME EXTRA PRECAUTIONS THEY CAN TAKE TO PREVENT POISONINGS.**

In late summer and early fall millions of teachers, administrators, health care practitioners, students, and others head back to campus to begin a new school year. You may be surprised to learn that every year, poison control centers manage thousands of calls from schools about potentially dangerous exposures to all kinds of things- laboratory & cleaning chemicals, pesticides, school and craft supplies, hand sanitizers, medicines, bites & stings, and many more! Check out our school exposures data snapshot and infographic to learn about these exposures and how to prevent them.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

## TEST YOUR POISON PREVENTION KNOWLEDGE

1. Name one safe place to store your medicine?
2. What does "OTC" medication mean?
3. Why is it important to read the label on all medication?
4. Why is it important to keep medicine in its original container?
5. Where would you find the number for the Poison Control Center?
6. Name a reason by you might call a Poison Center.
7. Name one candy that might look like medicine (a pill).
8. How should you get rid of unused medicines?
9. Are the small silica gel packets, found in shoe boxes, poisonous?
10. Name a poisonous plant that might make you ITCH.
11. Is it a good idea to use a kitchen tablespoon to give medicine?
12. Why is it important to turn on the lights when giving medicine?

*Answers on page 4*

# BACK TO SCHOOL

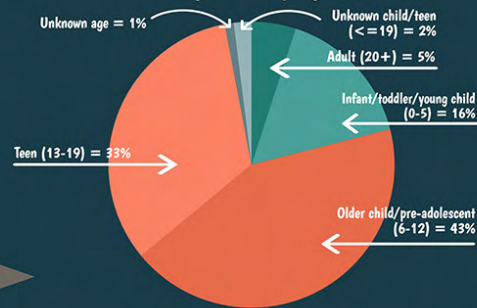
## POISONING PREVENTION TIPS & RESOURCES



### 1. BE PREPARED FOR AN EMERGENCY

Save the Poison Help number, 1 (800) 222-1222, in your mobile phone and display it in your classroom in case of emergency, or in case you have questions.

2010-2015 School-Based Human Exposures by Age



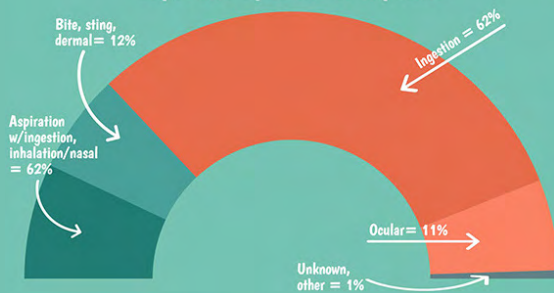
### 2. PRACTICE SAFE USE & STORAGE HABITS

The following should be stored up, away, and out of sight of children, and in their original containers. Also, make a habit of reviewing the label on any potentially hazardous substance or product prior to use:

- Personal care products, especially hand sanitizers.
- All medications and pharmaceuticals, including OTC medicines, vitamins, and supplements.
- Button batteries, such as those found in certain toys & key fobs.
- Chemicals and cleaning supplies, especially those containing chlorine bleach and ammonia.

### 3. BE AWARE OF OUTDOOR POISONING HAZARDS

2010-15 School-Based Human Exposures by Route of Exposure



During recess, sporting events, and other outdoor activities, be prepared with these prevention and treatment recommendations:

- Insect bites and stings: Disinfect the wound with antiseptic towelettes and apply antibiotic ointment. Call Poison Help to determine if medical treatment is needed.
- Plants and mushrooms: Ensure you are aware of any potentially toxic plants growing around your school's property or in your classroom.
- Pesticides: Never use outdoor-use pesticides indoors. Read and follow all directions on the label, every time.

### 4. COMMUNICATE SAFE MEDICINE USE

Research shows that students begin to self-medicate around 11 years old. As a teacher or school health professional, you can start a critical conversation with your students about the safe use of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines with the help of the OTC Medicine Safety program.

- Evidence-based educational program
- 100% free
- Supports the education of tweens about responsible use & storage of medicines
- For school nurses, teachers, community leaders, & families
- Contains lesson plans & resources

All program resources are available at [scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety](http://scholastic.com/OTCmedsafety)



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The best way to be prepared for poison emergencies is by programming the Poison Help number into your phone, 1-800-222-1222, and posting it somewhere visible in your home.







# School-Based Human Exposures: Poison Center Data Snapshot 2010-15

Overview of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System for School-Based Exposures, 2010-2015.<sup>1</sup>

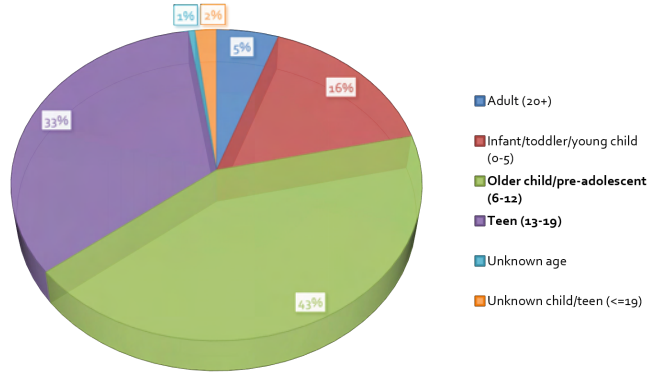
Poisoning is the leading cause of injury-related death in the U.S.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, unintentional poisoning is a top 10 cause of unintentional injury death, beginning at 10-14 years old.<sup>3</sup> AAPCC works with America's 55 poison centers to track, prevent, and provide expert treatment advice about unintentional and intentional poisonings and their sources.



## WHO?

**Who calls the poison center?** Anyone can experience a poison emergency. Poison centers take calls from and manage cases about people of all ages, and can provide help in 150 languages. Each year about half of exposure cases managed by poison centers involve children younger than six, but many of the more serious cases occur among adolescents and adults.

2010-2015 School-Based Human Exposures by Age



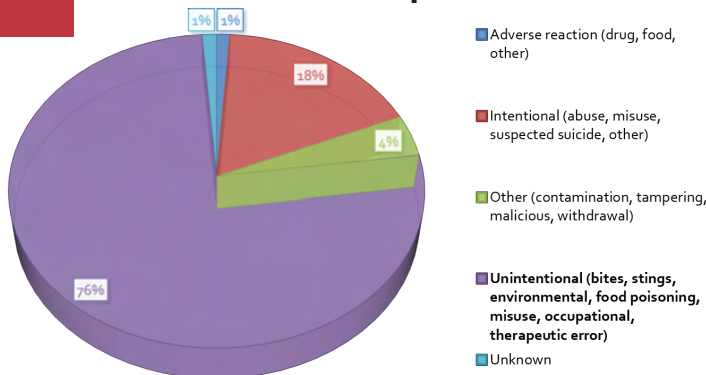
Someone called a poison center about every 11 seconds in 2014.

**When someone calls the poison center, who answers the phone?** Poison center cases are managed by medical experts – doctors, nurses, and pharmacists who have extensive training in poison prevention and treatment.

## WHAT?

**About what kinds of things do people call the poison center?** In 2015, poison centers were consulted for about 80,000 medicine dosing errors in kids/teens <=19. Additionally, all top ten exposure substances for teens were pharmaceuticals. Other school-based exposures reported included pens or inks, hand sanitizers, types of foreign body, toy, or miscellaneous substance, and other types of nonpharmaceutical substances.

2010-2015 School-Based Human Exposures, Reason for Exposure



## Venomous Snakes

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### There are 16 species of snakes found in New York State:

#### Non-Venomous:

Common Garter	Eastern Milk
Northern Brown	Smoot Green
Northern Red Belly	Eastern Ribbon
Northern Ringneck	Black Rat
Queen	Eastern Hognose
Eastern Worm	Shorthead Garter
Northern Water Snake	

#### Venomous:

Eastern Massasauga	Timber Rattlesnake
Northern Copperhead	



Common Garter



Eastern Hognose



Eastern Massasauga



Timber Rattlesnake

### Characteristics to tell a venomous from non-venomous snake:

#### Non-venomous snake:

- Pupil: round
- No pit between the eye and nostril
- Shape of head variable, often slender
- Scales underneath the tail, toward the tip, are divided

#### Venomous snake:

- Pupil: like a cat's eye, vertical
- Pit between the eye and nostril  
(the 3 venomous snakes in NY are all pit vipers)
- Broad, triangular-shaped head
- Scales underneath the tail, toward the tip, are undivided

### Just in case: If bitten by a venomous snake, get medical help.

Nonvenomous snakes have tiny teeth, which can leave a small bite mark. Few people encounter New York's venomous snakes, and fewer still are bitten—and even then, the bites are rarely fatal. A bite from one of New York's venomous snakes (copperhead, massasauga, timber rattlesnake) will swell, hurt, and turn black and blue. Children and the elderly are at greatest risk for a severe reaction. If bitten, remain calm and get medical help. Do not use a commercial snake-bite kit; they tend to do more harm than good.

Source: Retrieved from: [http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration\\_pdf/snakes.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/administration_pdf/snakes.pdf) August 2015

## Did You Know? Answers:

1. Up high and out of the reach of children
2. OTC means Over The Counter
3. To know the active ingredients, dose, for whom it is prescribed
4. To avoid misuse; to know what the medicine is, the precautions and directions
5. Inside cover of the phonebook, Google it or program it into your cell phone
6. If you think someone has a poison exposure and for questions or information
7. Tic Tacs, M&M or Skittles (among others)
8. At a Drug take back event, Medicine Drop Box, or mixed in with coffee ground, kitty litter and disposed of in the trash
9. NO, they are non-toxic. They are a potential choking hazard
10. Poison Ivy, poison sumac, poison oak
11. No, because it is not a consistent measure. Always use the measuring device that comes with the medicine or use a medicine measuring spoon or cup
12. So you can see that you are taking the proper medicine for the person for which it was prescribed, dose, and other important instructions.



# Program your cell phone 1-800-222-1222



**You just may save a life!**

## A Poisoning Can Happen to **You!**



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Poison Emergency? Poison Information? Call Us!



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*Serving 54 counties of New York State*

### Unintentional Poisoning Can Happen To You... At Any Age!

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
AT [WWW.UPSTATEPOISON.  
ORG](http://WWW.UPSTATEPOISON.ORG) FOR A MORE POISON  
RESOURCES, INCLUDING  
BROCHURES, POSTERS,  
ARCHIEVED NEWSLETTERS  
AND....



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