

THE DIFFERENCE

CALIFORNIA POISON CONTROL SYSTEM 2009

Have you ever drunk from the wrong cup accidentally?

“I thought I’d swallowed chlorine bleach and panicked—for myself and for my 9-month-old baby who was breastfeeding regularly. Thank heavens I called Poison Control! With great compassion the person answering assured me there was no real danger and calmly, clearly explained what to do. I was so grateful.”

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THE DIFFERENCE

*one minute makes
one call makes
one dollar makes
one system makes*

ONE MINUTE

Equals sixty seconds. A fleeting moment in which the unexpected can happen quickly. And as time flies, each tick furthers the poison's work—but also makes help possible. Rescue starts with a phone call—our cue.

ONE CALL

Equals quick response. Meaning, for paramedics, time-saving coordination. For physicians, expert consultation. And for victims and parents and anxious others, life-saving instruction and reassuring advice. No transfers, no referrals—just help. Immediately. And free of charge for all Californians.

ONE DOLLAR

Equals seven dollars saved. Meaning, for taxpayers, \$29 million less for uninsured and Medi-Cal visits. For budget analysts and insurance companies, \$70 million less on health care. And for those running—or needing—emergency rooms, more than 61,000 visits avoided. Annually. Now that's impact.

ONE SYSTEM

Equals greater efficiency, thanks to consolidated operations, uniform treatment guidelines and common management practices. Ninety-four cents of every state-funded dollar goes directly to program services, including educating the public on how to reduce and handle exposure incidents. No wonder that since its inception the California Poison Control System (CPCS) has been able to successfully consult on more than 4 million cases.





- *51% of all poison exposures involve children 5 years and younger.*

THE CALIFORNIA POISON CONTROL SYSTEM

“My 4-year-old somehow opened a childproofed vitamins bottle and swallowed an unknown number. I called Poison Control. The kind rep helped me estimate the dosage and contents, and reassured me that my child was not in mortal danger. She also described symptoms to watch for, just in case, and called back an hour later to make sure my little girl was okay. I couldn’t have hoped for better treatment.”

OUR MISSION

It’s our mission to protect the health of Californians by providing immediate, uninterrupted high quality emergency telephone advice for poison exposures and to serve as the primary resource for poison education, prevention and treatment in California.

OUR PROFILE

Via a single toll-free number (1-800-222-1222), the CPCS provides leading-edge poison control information and assistance throughout California, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. The four hotline sites in Sacramento, San Francisco, Madera and San Diego all use networked and uniform phone, computer, recording, and automatic call distribution systems. Our staff members, highly trained and experienced health care professionals, give critical information to callers in over 100 languages in cases of exposure to poisonous and hazardous substances. An interpreter service with over 100 languages helps us respond seamlessly to the needs of all residents. We are also expert at directing and coordinating care with hospitals, physicians, emergency response teams, insurance companies and other service providers—and at educating the public about reducing poisoning dangers and incidents.

OUR ROOTS

Modern poison control centers in the United States trace back to the 1950s and the post-war industrialization boom. In the 1980’s a move towards national accreditation standards resulted in a consolidation of poison centers and spurred more centralized funding efforts. In 1997 the CPCS unified previously unaffiliated centers throughout California, creating a single system with consolidated operations, collective treatment guidelines, and common management practices.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Now in our second decade of operation, the California Poison Control System (CPCS) delivers uncommon value to California residents, medical professionals, and other key constituencies. First and foremost we save lives, 24/7, quickly and expertly helping people and families when compromised by the ever-widening number of dangerous and potentially dangerous substances in our environment. Second we are extraordinarily efficient in what we do, costing taxpayers little and saving California millions upon millions of dollars over alternative ways of managing such emergencies.

Summarizing CPCS's achievements is a happy exercise though—given all that we've done—not a quick and easy one. The following highlights show why.



Stuart E. Heard, PharmD, FCSHP
Executive Director
Assistant Dean and Associate Clinical
Professor of Pharmacy
University of California San Francisco

Recent accomplishments include:

- Consulting on more than 300,000 poisoning cases annually in a time of severe budget and staffing reductions.
- Securing a large federal grant to upgrade our communications and emergency “surge” response capabilities.
- The provision of timely specific case data to participating county health departments.

Milestones include:

- Being awarded 2007 Gold IN-AWE Award from the Medical Marketing Association.
- Having the CPCS Health Education program cited as “best practices” in the Institute of Medicine report *Forging a Poison Prevention and Control System*.

Alliances formed in the last few years include:

- The California Department of Public Health, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.

CPCS has been a great success story by any measure. In spite of this we continue to face funding uncertainties that threaten all we've achieved.

Unfortunately, the way California currently funds poison control casts a long shadow over not only the state's hospitals, service providers, and overall healthcare system but over the state's readiness to respond to potential future disasters. We must work together to come up with a more stable long-term solution, and soon.

BACKGROUND AND OPERATIONS

The California Poison Control System or CPCS is administered through the University of California at San Francisco, School of Pharmacy, Department of Clinical Pharmacy. Responsible to the California Emergency Medical Services Authority, it is hosted at four highly integrated poison control sites:

- UC Davis Medical Center (Sacramento)
- San Francisco General Hospital
- Children's Hospital Central California (Fresno/Madera)
- UC San Diego Medical Center

HOTLINES

The California Poison Control System operates three toll-free, emergency hotlines:

- a public hotline for poison information and advice
- a medical consultation hotline for health professionals
- a hotline for 9-1-1 emergency dispatchers and fire and police personnel

All operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are answered by highly trained and specialized staff member physicians, pharmacists, nurses and poison information providers. Also available are interpreting services for more than 100 languages and a toll-free, TTY help line for use by the hearing and speech impaired.

CASE MANAGEMENT

The California Poison Control System has consulted on nearly 4 million poison cases since its inception, an average of 900 cases per day. Fifty-one percent of cases involve children age 5 and younger.

BENEFITS TO STATE ECONOMY

More than 61,000 emergency room and physician office visits are averted annually thanks to immediate service available from the CPCS. More than three out of four poison exposures are treatable at home, obviating unnecessary and costly trips to hospital emergency rooms. This translates into a \$70 million savings in health care costs for California each year.



CBRNE AND PUBLIC HEALTH NEEDS

The California Poison Control System addresses public health needs related to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) threats in three major ways:

- Rapid and reliable help during major public health events
- Planning, education and training of local, regional, and state organizations
- Real-time surveillance and identification of critical public health hazards

In addition, the CPCS helps develop and implement statewide and nationwide online real-time surveillance of calls for trends that would be able to quickly identify burgeoning public health and CBRNE issues.

“When I was a kid in Florida and ate a bottle of children’s Tylenol, the state’s poison control center helped my mom save my life. Now I live in California and have a 1-year-old of my own who recently dined on a gel candle. Remembering my own experience I immediately called the California Poison Control System. That was a smart move as it turned out, because what I’d also considered doing—inducing my child to vomit—would have been exactly the wrong thing and even dangerous.”

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

TOLL-FREE HELP LINES

Public Hotline – 1-800-222-1222

Immediate assessment and recommendations for managing poison exposure on-site, referrals to health care facilities when necessary, and follow-up telephone calls.

TTY Line – 1-800-972-3323

For use by the hearing and speech impaired.

Medical Consultation Line

Poison exposure and overdose diagnosis and treatment assistance to hospital personnel and health care professionals. Specialty consultants are available to aid in the care of hospitalized poisoning victims.

Emergency Personnel Line

9-1-1 ambulance dispatchers, police and fire personnel have access to a dedicated CPCS line for assistance in assessing the severity of a poison exposure. The CPCS provides treatment advice and helps determine if transport to a health care facility is necessary. Poison center triage for 9-1-1/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) toxic exposure related calls provides significant cost savings for supporting government agencies, health care institutions and the public.

CONSUMER AND HEALTH PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Programs that serve California residents in their communities through ongoing partnerships with locally-based organizations are a hallmark of the statewide CPCS consumer outreach and education program. The program is consumer-driven and responsive to the needs of our highly diverse audiences.

The CPCS provides customized outreach and education programs for residents, educators, and health professionals throughout California.

Ongoing professional education is offered to health care providers in California and the nation in four main ways. First, every academic member of the CPCS provides lectures and teaching on a regional basis. Teaching is provided to attending staff physicians, pharmacists, nurses, physicians in training, and students of all health disciplines throughout the state of California. In the past year, over 250 lectures have been given by CPCS staff on the management of poisonings.

The second and third aspects of our professional education effort are an online module lecture program and the CPCS newsletter “Call Us”. Both resources are available on

the CPCS web site. Links to 18 lectures on topics related to poisonings are also available in streaming video with slides and audio. In addition, following another link to topical newsletters brings the user to more than 25 “Call Us” newsletters on various topics. Each educational newsletter also includes pre- and post-test questions for self-evaluation.

Finally, the CPCS continues to add pertinent research to the world’s literature on topics such as poisoning and overdose, and bites and stings. One of the country’s most widely read handbooks on poisoning is authored and edited by members of the CPCS, and the system-wide database has fostered dozens of manuscripts in the medical literature. Together, these efforts provide the most extensive and up-to-date education of health care providers in the world.

Web Site – www.calpoison.org

First introduced in April 1999, www.calpoison.org is an integral part of the CPCS educational program, enhancing the system’s statewide presence and alerting visitors to potential dangers while furnishing practical advice and answers to common poison-related questions. Visitors can order or download a wide range of free materials.

SPECIAL SERVICES

Interpreters

Callers to the hotline have immediate access to interpreters fluent in over 100 languages.

HazMat

Information and assistance on the health hazards of toxic chemicals are provided to on-scene personnel during a chemical spill disaster or possible chemical attack. Depending on location, direct scene response by trained toxicologists is available. The CPCS is also a trusted source of health-related information on the effects of hazardous chemicals.

Public Health Surveillance

The CPCS acts as a community sentinel in instances of food poisoning, adverse drug or product reactions, and drug tampering, notifying local and state agencies, the media, and the public of potential health threats.

State-of-the-Art Information References

The CPCS maintains a complete reference library and computer database, updated quarterly, covering over one million poisons, drugs and toxic substances.



Pesticide Surveillance and Reporting

The CPCS contracts with the State Department of Pesticide Regulation to assist physicians in complying with mandatory reporting requirements for pesticide exposures. The CPCS also provides the state DPR with case data and information on the health issues related to pesticide exposure in California.

OEHHA

Through a contract with California's Office of Emergency Health Hazard Assessment, the CPCS answers health related questions from the public associated with pest eradication programs conducted by state authorities.

Industry Service Contracts

The CPCS maintains working relationships with environmental consulting companies, public health departments and hazardous materials response groups, providing 24-hour information and assistance.

Computerized Case Records

Confidential medical records are maintained on all cases and can serve as valuable indicators in spotting new trends, determining patterns and tailoring services. Data (minus personal information) are submitted continuously in real-time to the American Association of Poison Control Center's National Poison Data System.

“As an ER nurse at a community hospital for 14 years, I don’t know what we would do without the California Poison Control System’s services. I personally am frequently in contact with the CPCS, sometimes with questions about a patient’s poison ingestion, and other times getting a heads-up about someone heading our way who had been poisoned or potentially poisoned and how to treat it.”

HELPING CALIFORNIA’S FAMILIES BE SAFE AND PREPARED

The CPCS outreach and education program helps individuals and families learn to prevent common household poisonings and know where to go for fast, expert help and by:

- Conducting market research with California’s diverse audiences to ensure that we meet the needs of our constituency and develop innovative campaigns and initiatives grounded in the principles of social marketing.
- Providing consumer-focused, culturally relevant educational products and teaching tools free of charge in print and online in California’s top ten languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, Tagalog, Japanese, Hmong and Armenian).
- Reaching California’s vulnerable populations through an innovative, effective and cost-efficient strategy – partnering with more than 100 community-based organizations and community health workers serving at-risk, low-income parents statewide.
- Being expressly responsive to the growing and largely underserved Latino population and developing specialized teaching tools and program interventions in Spanish, such as the education-entertainment DVD *‘El Baby Shower’*, a manual for promotoras, and customized trainings for community health workers in Spanish.
- Broadcasting seasonal and topical press releases and producing media events for English, Spanish and Asian-language outlets throughout the year.
- Providing lectures and presentations for health professionals to ensure their clients and patients can learn about poison prevention and poison control services.
- Cultivating and maintaining partnerships, engaging in collaborative projects, and providing tailored services to public health departments, community-based organizations, and others engaged in public health regarding market research, designing culturally relevant education products and using social marketing.
- Hosting www.calpoison.org which answers common poison-related questions and furnishes practical advice in 10 languages and offers a wide range of free materials in print or via download.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Every year, our highly trained and dedicated hotline staff respond to over 300,000 calls from the public and from health professionals who need to know how to respond to a poisoning or drug-related emergency.

What would you do if your child, niece or grandchild swallowed a medicine found on the countertop? How would you know if one of those pills is harmless or potentially deadly?

You'd probably call poison control.

What if the poison control center was closed because of budget cuts? You might call 911. But guess who the 911 operator relies on for advice about pill ingestions? Poison control.

What about calling the ER? Well, guess who the ER relies on for help in a poisoning? Poison control.

Maybe you'd call your own doctor, or your health plan's 24-hour advice line. But once again, guess who they turn to when they get a poisoning call?

Poison control.

Ever since poison control centers were created in the 1950s, generations of parents, citizens, hospital staff and doctors have depended on them for ready access, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide prompt and reliable information about drugs and poisons. At the CPCS, our clinical pharmacists, nurses and poison information providers undergo months and years of rigorous training and must show thorough medical knowledge, good clinical judgment, effective communication skills and a commitment to excellence in patient care. They are supported by a team of doctors who are board-certified in medical toxicology, emergency medicine, pediatrics, critical care medicine and occupational and environmental medicine.

Quick, expert consultation prevents medically unnecessary visits to already overcrowded emergency rooms. And prompt, appropriate treatment for serious exposures saves countless lives and shortens hospital stays.

Could that pill that was on the countertop kill your child or grandchild? Or is it harmless? Our dedicated staff is ready to answer your call, 24 hours a day, every day.



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HOW WE HELP

- Nearly 4 million cases have been managed since the California Poison Control System's inception in 1997.
- Over 300,000 poisoning cases are consulted on annually, nearly 900 cases every day.
- \$70 million in health care costs are saved and 61,000 emergency room visits averted annually in California through CPCS telephone consultation.
- 51% of all poison exposures involve children five years and younger.
- 94% of poison exposures occur in the home.
- 78% of poison exposures are treated at home with help from the CPCS.
- 20% of calls are from consumers seeking advice on prevention and safety.
- 17% of calls originate from a healthcare facility or medical professional and require specialized toxicology consultations.

TOP NON-DRUG SUBSTANCES INVOLVED IN A POISONING

Substance	Common Examples
1. Cosmetics/Personal Care Products	toothpaste, lotion, mouthwash, deodorant
2. Household Cleaning Substances	soap, bleach, pine oil, laundry detergent, shampoo
3. Foreign Bodies/Toys/Miscellaneous	coins, silica gel, beads, batteries
4. Pesticides	rat bait, ant killer, snail killer, weed killer
5. Plants	poinsettia, oleander, dieffenbachia, dandelions, pyracantha, holly
6. Alcohols	rubbing alcohol, drinking alcohol, wood alcohol
7. Bites and Envenomations	spiders, snakes, bees, hornets, bats, scorpions
8. Food Products/Food	spoiled food, botulism, salmonella, paralytic shellfish poisoning, food tampering
9. Chemicals	ammonia, cyanide, arsenic, boric acid, strychnine, formaldehyde
10. Hydrocarbons	gasoline, charcoal lighter fluid, lamp oil, furniture polish

TOP DRUG RELATED SUBSTANCES INVOLVED IN A POISONING

Substance	Common Examples
1. Analgesics	acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen, opioids
2. Sedative/Hypnotics/Antipsychotics	tranquilizers, sleeping medications, mental health medicines
3. Topical Preparations	diaper rash ointment, hydrocortisone cream
4. Cold and Cough Preparations	decongestants, dextromethorphan
5. Cardiovascular Drugs	blood pressure medicines, cholesterol medicines
6. Antidepressants	SSRIs, trazodone, amitriptyline, lithium
7. Antimicrobials	antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals
8. Antihistamines	diphenhydramine, chlorpheniramine
9. Vitamins	chewable vitamins, iron, calcium, Vitamin C, prenatal vitamins
10. Gastrointestinal Preparations	antacids, stomach acid reducers

CALL BY COUNTY BY YEAR 2007

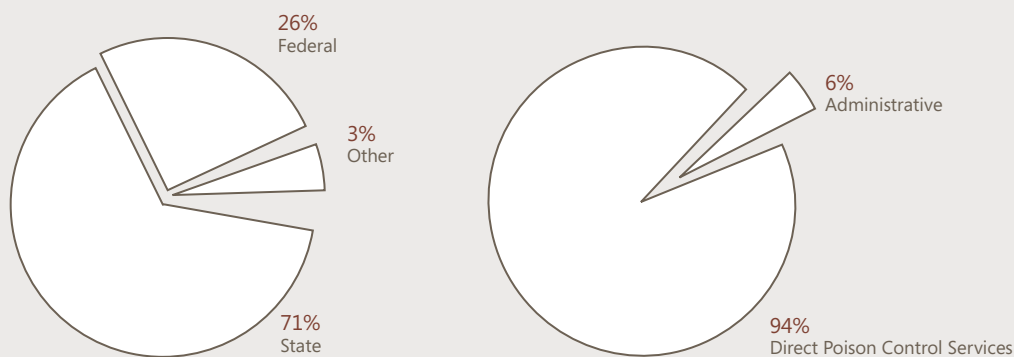
Report Period 01/01/2007 through 12/31/2007 – three hundred and sixty-five days

County	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases	County	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Alameda	11,787	1.98%	Orange	20,531	3.45%
Alpine	13	0.00%	Placer	4,355	0.73%
Amador	501	0.08%	Plumas	263	0.04%
Butte	3,084	0.52%	Riverside	15,792	2.65%
Calaveras	577	0.10%	Sacramento	19,819	3.33%
Colusa	176	0.03%	San Benito	424	0.07%
Contra Costa	8,601	1.45%	San Bernardino	15,630	2.63%
Del Norte	442	0.07%	San Diego	31,283	5.26%
El Dorado	2,522	0.42%	San Francisco	7,791	1.31%
Fresno	12,033	2.02%	San Joaquin	6,585	1.11%
Glenn	301	0.05%	San Luis Obispo	2,559	0.43%
Humboldt	1,945	0.33%	San Mateo	5,224	0.88%
Imperial	958	0.16%	Santa Barbara	3,051	0.51%
Inyo	158	0.03%	Santa Clara	13,747	2.31%
Kern	7,905	1.33%	Santa Cruz	2,477	0.42%
Kings	1,425	0.24%	Shasta	3,173	0.53%
Lake	944	0.16%	Sierra	56	0.01%
Lassen	380	0.06%	Siskiyou	600	0.10%
Los Angeles	45,685	7.68%	Solano	7,431	1.25%
Madera	1,507	0.25%	Sonoma	4,890	0.82%
Marin	2,672	0.45%	Stanislaus	5,963	1.00%
Mariposa	226	0.04%	Sutter	941	0.16%
Mendocino	1,194	0.20%	Tehama	739	0.12%
Mered	2,000	0.34%	Trinity	154	0.03%
Modoc	89	0.01%	Tulare	3,963	0.67%
Mono	175	0.03%	Tuolumne	806	0.14%
Monterey	2,728	0.46%	Ventura	5,576	0.94%
Napa	1,386	0.23%	Yolo	2,235	0.38%
Nevada	1,385	0.23%	Yuba	1,171	0.20%
			Total	300,028	

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Funding and support for poison control services in California are provided by:

- State of California: Poison control is funded in the State General Fund and through a contract with the California Emergency Medical Services Authority.
- Federal funding from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA): HRSA provides funding through their poison control stabilization and enhancement grant program.
- State of California: Department of Pesticide Regulation, Department of Public Health, Emergency Preparedness Office, and Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment.
- Other sources: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, private industry contracts, grants, and donations.



In-kind support provides over 30% additional backing by hosting answering sites and offices. This support includes space, facilities and administrative services at the following institutions:

- Children’s Hospital Central California
- University of California San Francisco
- University of California Davis Medical Center (Sacramento)
- San Francisco General Hospital
- University of California San Diego Medical Center
- University of California Los Angeles Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center

In addition, physicians at these sites volunteer their expertise to hotline staff and provide support to our training program for physicians, pharmacists and nurses.

CALIFORNIA POISON CONTROL SYSTEM

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CALIFORNIA
POISON ACTION LINE
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CALIFORNIA
POISON CONTROL
SYSTEM

NEW LEAF PAPER®
 ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS STATEMENT
of using post-consumer waste fiber vs. virgin fiber

California Poison Control System saved the following resources by using New Leaf Reincarnation Matte, made with 100% recycled fiber and 50% post-consumer waste, processed chlorine free, and manufactured with electricity that is offset with Green-e® certified renewable energy certificates.

trees	water	energy	solid waste	greenhouse gases
5 fully grown	1,014 gallons	2 million Btu	222 pounds	375 pounds

Calculations based on research by Environmental Defense Fund and other members of the Paper Task Force.

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