

# Poison Prevention Training Program

**California Poison Control System**

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San Francisco, CA 94118

**1-800-222-1222**

[www.calpoison.org](http://www.calpoison.org)

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## Preface

Welcome to the California Poison Control System Poison Prevention Training Program.

During this training, you will learn how to spot a poison, how poison can cause harm, how to prevent poison exposure, and what to do if someone has been poisoned. Upon successful completion of this training program, you will receive a Certification of Completion from California Poison Control System and access to poison prevention materials and resources. We hope that after completing this course, you will know how to recognize poison exposure risks and know what to do during a poisoning emergency.

Anyone living and/or working in California is welcome to complete the course and utilize the online poison prevention resource center. If you do not live/work in California, please contact your [local poison center](#) for available trainings and resources.

If you have any questions about California Poison Control System materials or programs, please visit [www.calpoison.org](http://www.calpoison.org) or email us at [healthed@calpoison.org](mailto:healthed@calpoison.org).

We appreciate your time and commitment to this program.

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## Module 1: Introduction



The course consists of five lessons:

1. About U.S. Poison Centers and the California Poison Control System
2. Understanding the poisoning problem
3. Common poisons and prevention practices
4. What to do in case of a poisoning
5. Sharing poison prevention information with your community

Time commitment:

- The course is designed for you to complete at your own pace
- There will be a pretest and posttest, as well as quizzes after each section
- You must score 80% on the post-test
- Lessons must be completed in the order they are presented
- After completion you will receive a Certificate of Completion and access to poison prevention materials and resources

The Poison Prevention Training Program (PPTP) was designed to increase the number of Californians reached with poison prevention education. Healthcare professionals and community members interested in the safety and welfare of their communities are invited to attend. Upon completion of the training, individuals will be equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to spot a poison, to prevent poison exposure, and what to do if someone has been poisoned.

The PPTP is built on a foundation of epidemiological data, health behavior and health education theory, and adult and childhood education theory. Experts in the field of toxicology, injury prevention, and education assisted with the development. The PPTP is designed to encourage the adoption of long-term behavior change, maintenance of a safe and healthy environment, and to teach Californians how to identify poisons, prevent poisonings, and respond appropriately in poison emergencies.

The California Poison Control System Health Education Program believes that our collaborative efforts will encourage Californians to adopt safe and healthy poison prevention habits.

The goal of the PPTP is to educate people on how to recognize poison exposure risks and to know what to do during a poisoning emergency. By completing the PPTP, Californians' will increase poisoning prevention knowledge and skills, so to prevent and manage poisonings.

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## Module 2: About U.S. Poison Centers and California Poison Control System

**Objective:** To learn about the history and role of U.S. Poison Centers and specifics about the California Poison Control System

**Unit 1:** History of Poison Centers

**Unit 2:** American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC)

**Unit 3:** The Poison Help Line

**Unit 4:** California Poison Control System

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## Unit 1: History of Poison Centers



Poison centers are the front-line responders to poison emergencies and are the leaders in poison prevention activities. They provide cost-effective poison emergency treatment advice. The first poison center was established in Illinois in 1953. Most early poison centers were based in emergency departments or hospital pharmacies, staffed by nurses, physicians, or pharmacists with limited toxicology training and few information resources. Most people assumed that poison centers would serve the toxicological needs of physicians; however, practitioners quickly realized that the public could benefit from the centers for guidance. The information previously used by poison centers to provide treatment advice in poison emergencies came from index cards that were produced by the National Clearinghouse for Poison Control Centers (NCPCC).

During the 1970s and 1980s, a move was made to consolidate and regionalize poison centers. An effort to improve the quality of poison emergency services led to the development of national standards for poison centers and a certification process that assured compliance to these standards. The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) became the standard setting and accreditation body for poison centers in the United States. The NCPCC was dissolved and the AAPCC became the centralized data base for poison centers across the country. Since 1983, the AAPCC has been compiling poison center data using the Toxic Exposure Surveillance System (TESS) and, since 2005, the National Poison Data System (NPDS) in cooperation with U.S. poison centers. NPDS is the single largest database of poisonings in the United States. The data is used to quickly identify hazards, improve prevention efforts, and guide clinical research and direct training.

Poison centers provide free, timely diagnosis and treatment advice to callers, such as parents, child care providers, pharmacists, nurses and physicians. Because patients can seek early and free assistance, poison centers can reduce the severity of poisonings, as well as the number of ineffective and potentially dangerous remedies. More than 65% of the poisonings are managed safely at home by poison centers through telephone consultation with highly trained staff. These consultations eliminate unnecessary laboratory tests, ambulance transports, and visits to emergency rooms and physician offices.

## Unit 2: American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC)

The [American Association of Poison Control Centers](#) supports the nation's 55 poison centers in their efforts to prevent and treat poison exposures. Poison centers offer free, confidential medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222. This service provides a primary resource for poisoning information and helps reduce costly emergency department visits through in-home treatment.

The AAPCC's mission is to actively advance the health care role and public health mission of our members through information, advocacy, education, and research.



AAPCC at a glance:

- Communications/Public Education
- Advocacy and Government Affairs
- Professional Development
- Data Services

The AAPCC developed national standards for poison centers and a certification process that assures compliance to the standards. These standards include:

- 24-hour-a-day services
- Extensive on-site resources
- Medical toxicologist back-up
- Public education programs
- Professional education programs
- Surveillance efforts

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### Unit 3: The Poison Help Line

In February 2000, President Clinton signed the Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act (PL 106-174) to ensure every U.S. resident has access to a certified regional poison center. Funding was provided to create a single toll-free number to be shared by poison centers across the country.

In 1997, the California Poison Control System joined poison centers across the country and the AAPCC to introduce a new, poison emergency national toll-free helpline. The number allows callers to get free, confidential advice from a poison expert 24-hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year anywhere in the country. Funding for the national number is provided by the Poison Control Program of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).



The toll-free Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222, connects you to your local poison center. You will speak with a professional trained nurse, pharmacist, or physician in a poisoning emergency.

- You can call from anywhere in the United States
- The call is free and confidential
- Translation is available in over 200 languages
- Most people do not have to go to a physician or hospital — people usually get the help they need over the phone
- You can also learn about your risks before an emergency



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## Unit 4: California Poison Control System

The California Poison Control System was developed in 1997 as part of the Department of Clinical Pharmacy at the University of California San Francisco, School of Pharmacy. It is the largest single provider of poison control services in the United States. As a system, it consists of the combined services of four smaller regional poison centers located in Sacramento, San Francisco, Fresno/Madera, and San Diego — divisions that use uniform protocols and guidelines to provide consistent, quality poison information for the entire state of California. The California Poison Control System is certified and accredited by the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC).



When California residents call the California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222, callers speak with specially trained pharmacists, nurses, and health care providers who can immediately provide expert treatment advice, assistance, and/or a referral for medical care over the phone in case of exposure to poisonous, hazardous, or toxic substances. The California Poison Control System is accessible to the public and medical professionals and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. All calls are free,

confidential, and language interpreters are available in over 200 languages.

Since 1997, the California Poison Control System has received over 6 million calls and continues to save an estimated \$13.39 in medical spending for every \$1 spent on poison control services. The California Poison Control System also serves the state by coordinating outreach and education programs to increase awareness of poison prevention to the public.

### *Mission and Goal*

The mission of the California Poison Control System is to protect the health of Californians by providing immediate, uninterrupted, high-quality emergency telephone advice for poison exposures and to serve as the primary source for poison education, prevention, and treatment in California. By providing poison prevention information and treatment recommendations through our 24-hour emergency and information hotline, in combination with providing multilingual and multimedia poison prevention messages to the public through our Health Education Program, California Poison Control System keep Californians healthy and saves residents millions of dollars in unnecessary health care cost.

Each year, the California Poison Control System provides services to thousands of Californians — these services include:

- Poison emergency telephone service
- Research and data collection
- Public education
- Professional education
- Pesticide illness reports for California
- Case reports on pests spraying
- Substance Use Line and Medication Assisted Therapy

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The California Poison Control System receives a variety of poisoning-related calls, which include:

- Medications
- Household products
- Plants and mushrooms
- Food poisoning
- Bites or stings
- Marijuana
- Street drugs
- Snake bites



When a call is received, one of our poison experts will take the live call. If the caller does not speak English, an interpreter will be provided — interpreters are available in over 200 languages. During the call, our poison experts will gather information from the caller about the poisoning incident and assesses the severity of the exposure. The assessment is then followed with treatment recommendations, and, if necessary, the patient will be referred to a health care facility. Calling the California Poison Control System is fast, free, and safe — just one phone call can save callers from an unnecessary trip to the hospital.

When you call the California Poison Control System in a poisoning emergency, you will be asked to give:

- Your name, phone number, county, and zip code
- The victim's name, age and weight
- The name of the substance or poison
- The amount of the substance or poison
- The time the poisoning took place
- Any symptoms the victim has
- Any current health problems the victim has
- Any medicines the victim is taking
- If possible, take the poison or the container to the phone with you — you may be asked to describe the poison or give information from any labels on the container

### *Professional Education*



The California Poison Control System health care professional training and education program is planned, designed, and implemented by medical directors, specialists in poison information toxicologists, managing directors, and public health professionals. The program consists of a variety of resources that are used by not only health professionals in California but also nationally and internationally.

The California Poison Control System training and education resources reflect the latest advances in poisoning management and include: online toxicology continuing education and poison prevention training courses; mobile apps and portals providing information to physicians; medical literature publications and manuals including Poisoning and Drug Overdose; newsletters; research collaborations and peer review; didactic lectures and grand rounds; and, an extensive formal toxicology training program for medical and pharmacy students, residents, fellows, and California Poison Control System academics and staff throughout California.

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## Research and Data Collection

The California Poison Control receives calls through a statewide virtual private network. Each call to the California Poison Control System is documented in a confidential specialized case record and stored securely. In near real time, de-identified data from California Poison Control System poisoning exposure and information cases are uploaded to the National Poison Data Surveillance System (NPDS). Through this database of poisoning related health information, NPDS can provide near real-time nationwide adverse event monitoring, surveillance, resilience, response, and situational awareness.



## Public Education

The California Poison Control System Health Education Program works diligently to develop and implement innovative strategies to prevent poisonings and raise awareness of the California Poison Control System and its services. These programs and strategies include:

- Poison Prevention Training Program
- Poisons, Prevention & Help Training Program for Community Based Organizations
- Poison Safety Online Education Course
- School age children poison prevention outreach through stakeholder collaborations
- Annual development of new educational tools
- Culturally/linguistically sensitive educational outreach & materials distribution
- National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) activities



## Poison Emergency Telephone Service



The California Poison Control System operates the 24-hour emergency telephone information service, providing safe and effective poisoning treatment advice for human poisonings. In addition, most questions about the safe use, storage and disposal of potentially dangerous substances can be answered. The emergency telephone information service is accessible throughout California, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, through the national toll-free number. The California Relay Service (CRS) provides Communications Assistant (CA) for callers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-disabled (TDD) by calling 711, and translation services are available in more than 200 languages.

The 24-hour phone lines are answered by specially trained pharmacists, nurses, toxicologists, and health care providers. Furthermore, medical directors and board-certified medical toxicologists are on-call 24-hours a day for staff consultations. The California Poison Control System specialists also have access to a comprehensive library of research, academic, clinical care and toxicology reference materials and resources. These resources include those developed by the California Poison Control System, such as case management recommendations, clinical care research projects, and the [Poisoning and Drug Overdose](#) book. External resources, including POISONDEX®, are also available online to California Poison Control System specialists

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## Module 3: Understanding the Poisoning Problem

**Objective:** To provide current poisoning facts and statistics to give a better understanding of the poisoning problem.

**Unit 1:** Poison Defined

**Unit 2:** Poisoning Statistics

**Unit 3:** Victims of Poisonings

**Unit 4:** Poisoning Risk Factors

**Unit 5:** Child Resistant Packaging

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## Unit 1: Poison Defined

A poison is any substance which may cause harm or death if it gets into your body.

A poison can enter the body by:

- Ingestion (being swallowed) – most common route of exposure
- Ocular exposure (splashed in the eye)
- Dermal exposure (splashed on the skin)
- Inhalation (breathed in)
- Bites or stings of an animal or insect



A poison can be found all around us in different forms:

- Solids (medicine - ex: pills and tablets, plants, powders, pesticides, fertilizers, lead)
- Liquids (perfumes, cleaning supplies, auto products, medicine – ex: cough syrups)
- Sprays (insecticides, spray paint, cleaning products)
- Gases/Vapors (carbon monoxide, air pollution, inhalants, cleaning products)

Most common substances involved in potential poisonings:

- Analgesics (all types of pain relievers: over-the-counter, prescription, herbal, etc.)
- Cleaning Substances (Household)
- Cosmetics/Personal Care Products
- Sedative/Hypnotics/Antipsychotics

Other harmful substances involved in potential poisonings:

- Bites and Envenomation
- Antihistamines
- Cardiovascular Drugs
- Antidepressants
- Pesticides
- Dietary supplements/herbals
- Street drugs
- Plants
- Automotive products (anti-freeze, windshield wiper fluid)
- Batteries
- Alcohols
- Carbon monoxide
- Topical preparations



## Unit 2: Poisoning Statistics

- Drug poisoning is now the leading cause of injury death in the U.S. and has increased by more than 300 percent over the last three decades. Almost 90 percent of poisoning deaths can be attributed to illicit drugs, with prescription drugs accounting for the majority of the drug overdose deaths.
- Among people ages 25-64, unintentional poisoning caused more deaths than motor vehicle crashes.
- In 2010, unintentional poisonings contributed to 831,295 emergency department visits, totaling over 2,000 people a day.
- More than 60,000 young children are seen in emergency departments each year because they got into medication when adult supervision was lacking.
- According to the 2018 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System, 5,753 cases were managed per day by all 55 poison centers in the US. Someone called a poison center about every 15 seconds in 2018 and about 24% of exposure calls came from healthcare facilities.
- In 2019, California Poison Control System fielded 224,611 human exposure calls. All calls received by California Poison Control System, including informational calls, totaled 251,079.



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## Unit 3: Victims of Poisoning

- Nationally, 47% of reported poisonings involve children under the age of six. In 2019, 40% of the reported poisonings to California Poison Control System involved children age five and younger.
- Few people realize that adults get poisoned too. In 2019, 43% of the calls that California Poison Control System received involved adults over age 20. Of the 1,253 human fatalities reported to the AAPCC in 2015, 79% occurred in adults age 20-69. Adult poisonings result in more deaths and serious injuries than any other age group.



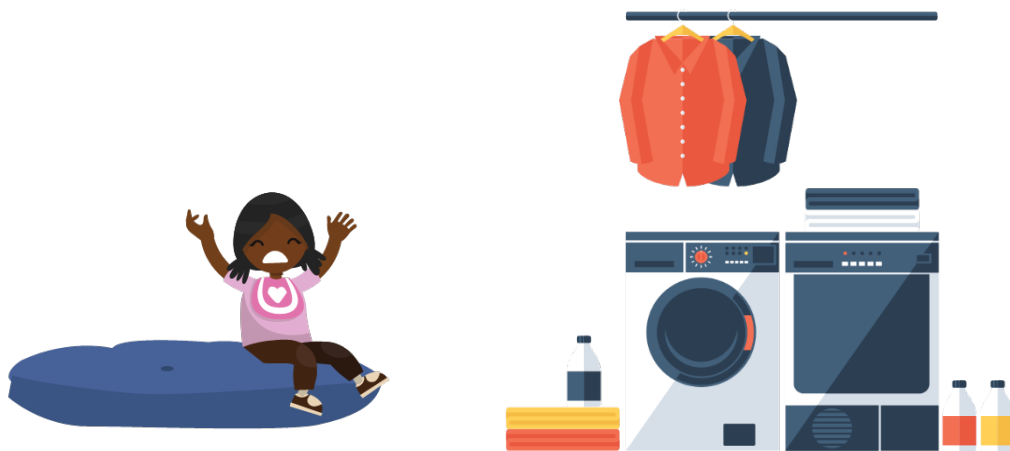


## Unit 4: Poisoning Risk Factors

There are several risk factors associated with unintentional poisoning.

These factors include:

- Lack of supervision - Children left alone, even for a few moments, are at greatest risk of poisoning.
- Improper storage - Potential poisons that are left within the reach of children increase their risk of poisoning. Be aware that household products and medicines that are stored in child-resistant packaging are not child proof! Children may be able to open these containers.



- Children's curious nature - Children are curious and they like to explore. Sometimes they taste and inhale unsafe products or even get unsafe products on their skin or in their eyes.
- Children's desire to mimic adult behavior - Children often mimic the behavior of adults. For example, children might take a medicine because they saw an adult take it.
- Failure to read and follow directions - Failure to read and follow directions on product labels is a common reason adults get poisoned.

## Unit 5: Child-Resistant Packaging

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) enforced the Poison Prevention Packaging Act of 1970 (15 U.S.C. §§ 1471-1476). The Act requires child-resistant packaging for various drugs and household products. Child-resistant packaging is designed to be significantly difficult for children under the age of five to open.

**Child-resistant packaging does not mean the packaging is child proof.** Some children can open child-resistant containers. Since the regulations have been in effect, there have been remarkable declines in reported deaths from childhood poisonings. The CPSC estimates that child-resistant packaging for aspirin and oral prescription medicine saved the lives of about 700 children since the requirements went into effect in the early 1970s.



The CPSC revised its child-resistant packaging regulations in 1996 to ensure the packaging is both child-resistant and “adult-friendly.” Child-resistant packaging was tested on children under the age of five and on adults ages 50-70. A variety of adult-friendly child-resistant packaging styles are now being used.

A list of substances that require special packaging as of 2009 can be found in the resource section.

## Module 4: Common Poisons

**Objective:** To learn basic facts about potential poisons and poison prevention tips.

**Unit 1:** Medicines

**Unit 2:** Household Products

**Unit 3:** Plants

**Unit 4:** Carbon Monoxide

**Unit 5:** Food Poisoning

**Unit 6:** Lead Poisoning

**Unit 7:** Bites and Stings

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## Unit 1: Medicines



About 58% of calls to California Poison Control System in 2019 involved medicines, both prescription and over-the-counter. Medicine can be dangerous if used incorrectly or if the wrong amount is taken.

### Most Common Medication Poisonings Reported to California Poison Control System

- Analgesics
- Sedative/Hypnotics/Antipsychotics
- Cardiovascular Drugs
- Antidepressants
- Antihistamines
- Topical Preparations
- Hormones and Hormone Antagonist
- Anticonvulsants
- Stimulants and Street Drugs
- Dietary Supplements/Herbals/Homeopathic



### A Common Cause of Medication Poisoning Occurs from Dosing Errors:

- Taking too much
- Taking within close time frame
- Taking wrong medicine or administering medicine the wrong way
  - ex. ear drops being placed in the eyes
- Drug interactions - can occur when medication interacts with a certain food, herbal product, alcohol or another medication
  - Taking some over the counter (OTC) medications with prescription medications can cause serious problems
  - Taking some medications with certain foods can lessen the effect of the medication.
- Adverse reaction – can occur if expired medications are used

### Tips to Prevent Medication Poisoning:

- Store medicine and vitamins in locked cabinets out of the reach of children
- Keep medicine and vitamins in the original container
- Use child resistant packaging and replace caps tightly
- Throw out expired or leftover medicines and those with missing labels
- Always read labels before taking or giving medicine; check the name, expiration date and directions
- Ask the doctor or pharmacist about any food or drinks that might react with the medicine
- Tell the doctor about any medications including vitamins that you are taking
- Never take medicine that belongs to someone else, even if you have the same symptoms
- After each dose, record the time, date and name of drug that was taken or given

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- If you forget to take or give medicine at the correct time, do not double dose without checking with your doctor first
- Do not take or give medicine in the dark, without your glasses on, or while you are sleepy
- Never call medicine “candy”
- Never give or take extra medicine if some get spilled; call your doctor or pharmacist first
- Use a correct measuring spoon, do not use a kitchen spoon, and know the difference between a tablespoon and a teaspoon
- If you are taking more than one medication, make a list of all your medications to include the name, reason you are taking it, the amount you are taking, the times of day you are taking it, and the name and phone number of the doctor who prescribed it
- If you suspect any medication errors or have any questions call the California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222

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## Unit 2: Household Products



Some of the most common household and personal care products can be very hazardous. Children are often attracted to the bright colors, interesting containers, and the sweet-smell of household products. Often household products are mistaken by children for something that is good for them to eat or drink. For example, a liquid cleaner may be mistaken for juice. Do not rely on the smell or taste of a household product to deter children.

These include:

- Cleaning substances, including hand sanitizers
- Laundry products
- Cosmetics
- Garden supplies
- Automotive products
- Pesticides
- Toys
- Fuels
- Paints
- Pool products



These products come in many shapes, sizes and colors. Liquids, powders, granules, sprays and aerosols can easily enter the body through the mouth, eyes, nose and skin.

A list of common poisonous household products can be found in the resource center.

Tips to Prevent Household Product Poisoning:

- Lock up household cleaners, pesticides, auto products, garage products, and cosmetics where children cannot see or reach them
- Store chemicals and household products in their original containers
- Do not reuse empty household containers, such as food containers and drink bottles
- Program the number to California Poison Control System on all phones (1-800-222-1222)

## Unit 3: Plants

Plants are a common cause of poisoning. Both indoor and outdoor plants can be poisonous.

Plants, flowers, and mushrooms are often beautiful to look at but many are poisonous. In some cases, only part of a plant or flower is poisonous.

A list of common poisonous plants can be found in the resource center.



### Tips to Prevent Plant Poisoning:

- Know the names of all the plants in your home and yard
- Label all plants with their names so you can identify a plant if it is eaten
- Keep house plants, seeds, and bulbs out of the reach of children and pets
- Do not eat wild plants or mushrooms; cooking poisonous plants does not make them safe to eat
- Remove mushrooms growing in your yard and throw them away in a covered garbage can
- Teach your children to never put any part of a plant into their mouths
- If you suspect a plant poisoning, remove any plant material from the victim's mouth and call California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222

## Unit 4: Carbon Monoxide



Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that can kill a person in minutes. It is produced wherever fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. If appliances that burn fuel are maintained and used properly, the amount of CO that is produced is harmless.

CO is one of the leading causes of poisoning death in the United States. Early symptoms of CO poisoning can mimic the flu or other illnesses. These symptoms may include: fatigue, dizziness, headache, vomiting, difficulty breathing, confusion and fainting. CO poisoning may lead to unconsciousness and death. CO gas can be especially dangerous for pregnant women and their unborn babies, infants, and people with anemia and a history of heart disease.

### Most Common Sources of Carbon Monoxide

- Oil, wood, or gas furnaces
- Space heaters (kerosene heaters)
- Gas or oil water heaters
- Gas stoves
- Gas dryers
- Fireplaces and wood stoves
- Charcoal grills
- Automobiles
- Lawn mowers and other gas-powered lawn equipment



### Tips to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

- Have fuel-burning appliances, venting and chimney systems in your home inspected by a professional technician, ideally every year
- If possible, install and use an exhaust fan vented to the outside over gas stoves
- Do not use an oven or gas range to heat your home
- Do not let the fireplace or space heater run while you are sleeping
- Open flues when fireplaces are in use
- Never use charcoal grills inside your home, garage, or inside a tent; only use in a well-ventilated area
- Never leave an automobile engine running in a garage, even if the garage door to the outside is open (Fumes can build up quickly)
- Do not sleep in a parked car while the engine is running
- Have exhaust system in your automobiles inspected for possible leaks
- Do not use any gasoline-powered engines, such as mowers, weed trimmers, chain saws, small engines or generators in enclosed spaces
- Install at least one carbon monoxide detector near the sleeping areas in your home
- Call California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222 for more information



## Unit 5: Food Poisoning

Food poisoning occurs when food contaminated by bacteria, parasite or virus is eaten.

Symptoms include upset stomach, abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and dehydration. Symptoms range from mild to serious. These symptoms can also occur if there is another condition related to abdominal organs, like the appendix, kidneys, or gall bladder.



### Tips to Prevent Food Poisoning:

- Check the expiration dates on all foods, especially meats, poultry and dairy products; do not buy or use foods beyond their expiration dates
- Do not use canned goods with bulges, leaks, or dents
- Wash hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water before and after handling food and especially after using the bathroom
- Keep raw foods separate from ready to eat foods
- Wash utensils and cutting boards after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry and before they touch other food
- Use one plate for raw meat and another plate after the meat is cooked
- Refrigerate or freeze perishable food within two hours after buying or preparing. If room temperature is above 90°F, refrigerate perishable food within one hour
- Cook meat, poultry and seafood thoroughly. Meats should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly to remove visible dirt and discard the outermost leaves of lettuce and cabbage
- Set refrigerator temperature to 40°F or below. The freezer should be kept at 0°F
- Defrost foods safely, using one of the following methods:
  - In the refrigerator - wrap meat, poultry and fish so that the juices don't drip on other foods. After defrosting, cook ground meat, poultry and fish within one-two days, other meats should be cooked within three-five days
  - In the microwave - Use the "defrost" or "50 percent power" setting to avoid cooking the edges of the food. Cook food immediately after defrosting in a microwave
  - In cold water - Put food in a sealed package or plastic bag and immerse in cold water; change the water every 30 min. or place the sealed package under cold, running water. Cook food immediately after defrosting
- Throw out any leftovers that have been at room temperature for more than two hours or in hot weather for more than one hour
- If hot food must be out for longer than two hours, use warming trays or slow cookers to keep food hot
- If cold food must be out for longer than two hours, use a cooler or ice bucket
- Do not eat any food you are unsure about — when in doubt, throw it out
- Pregnant women, young children, older adults and people with weakened immune system should take extra precautions to avoid raw or rare meat and poultry; raw or undercooked fish or shellfish; raw or undercooked eggs or foods containing them such as cookie dough and homemade ice cream; raw sprouts (alfalfa, bean, clover, radish); un-pasteurized juices, ciders, milk and milk products; soft cheeses, blue-veined cheese and un-pasteurized cheese; refrigerated pates and meat spreads; uncooked hotdogs, luncheon meats and deli meats
- Call the California Poison Control System for more information (1-800-222-1222)

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## Unit 6: Lead Poisoning



Lead poisoning is a disease caused most often by eating lead paint chips or breathing or eating lead dust. Lead is especially harmful to infants and children aged 6 years and younger because their small bodies absorb lead more easily. Lead poisoning can slow a child's development and cause learning and behavior problems. Small amounts of lead can also damage a child's brain, kidney, and stomach.

### Some Possible Sources of Lead:

- Peeling or chipping paint in homes built before 1978
- Dust from sanding or removing old paint and wallpaper
- Contaminated soil from a nearby industry that uses lead
- Soil around an older home that has chipping outside paint
- Contaminated clothing from working in a lead industry or with lead products
- Old lead pipes
- Some imported pottery, candies, canned foods and mini-blinds
- Lead glazed ceramic, china and leaded crystal glassware
- Inexpensive costume jewelry

### Tips to Preventing Lead Poisoning:

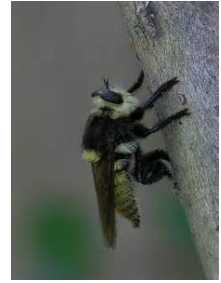
- Clean up chipping or peeling paint from inside and outside your home
- Clean up paint chips and lead dust on window sills and on the floor near windows, doorways and woodwork by using a damp mop or cloth and a special lead cleaning product.
- Have paint checked by an environmentalist if you are remodeling a home built before 1978
- Shower and change clothes before going home after working with lead on your job or hobby
- Store and wash work clothes separately
- Wash children's toys often
- Throw away lead-painted toys or clothes
- Never store food in open cans or pottery
- Buy pottery with lead-free glazes
- Wash children's hands before they eat
- Eat foods high in iron and calcium which can help to remove lead from the body easier
- Run cold water for a few minutes before using it for cooking or drinking
- Call the California Poison Control System for more information (1-800-222-1222)



Even children who appear healthy may have high levels of lead. The only way to know for sure if your child has been exposed to lead is with a simple blood test. If too much lead is in the body, your child may need treatment. To find out how to have your child tested, contact your pediatrician or local health department.

## Unit 7: Bites and Stings

Most people who are stung or bitten by an insect, spider, snake, or fish will have redness, itching, swelling, and some pain around the site. Some people are allergic to stings and bites and may experience hives, rash, itching palms and feet, headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and difficulty breathing. If you are stung and have any of these reactions, go to the nearest hospital or doctor right away.



### Tips to Prevent Poisoning from Bites and Stings:

- When camping, picnicking or engaging in other outdoor activities such as yard work, wear long pants, long sleeves, gloves, and shoes; avoid walking in tall bushes or shrubs
- Apply insect repellent containing up to 50% DEET or 15% picaridin to your clothing and sparingly to your skin. The amount depends on the length of outdoors time. Always read the label before using.
- Before dressing, shake out clothing, shoes, and hats that have not been worn for a while
- Get rid of clutter in basements, closets, attics, and garages
- Dust and vacuum around windows, corners of rooms, under furniture, and in storage areas regularly
- Wear light-colored clothing outdoors to help spot ticks; wear long sleeves and pants tucked into your socks or boots
- After being outdoors, check your body and hair for ticks
- Wear shoes and heavy pants when walking and hiking in areas where snakes are likely to be found
- Do not reach into rocky cracks, under logs, or large rocks
- Do not touch a snake, even if a snake looks dead. A snake can still bite up to one hour after its death.
- Do not tease a snake
- Avoid jellyfish at all times, even if they are washed ashore
- When swimming in the ocean, splash around when you first go into the water; this will scare stingrays away
- Program the number for the California Poison Control System into your cell phone (1-800-222-1222)



Photo of a black widow spider

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## Module 5: What to Do in Case of a Poisoning

**Objective:** To learn what to do in case of a potential poisoning.

**Unit 1:** First Aid and Treatment

**Unit 2:** Syrup of Ipecac

**Unit 3:** Commonly Asked Questions

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## Unit 1: First Aid and Treatment

Poison Control Hotline:

**1-800-222-1222**

The most important step in aiding a poison victim is to call the California Poison Control System immediately. Never wait for symptoms to occur; even if the victim looks and feels fine, you still need to call immediately.

Poisoning related symptoms can be delayed. What you do in the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death.

Staff at the poison center is available to provide quick, accurate, precise poisoning treatment information. If necessary, the victim will be referred to the nearest health care facility for treatment.

If you think someone has been poisoned follow the first-aid steps below and call California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222 right away.

For Swallowed Poisons:

- Do not induce vomiting
- Call the California Poison Control System immediately

For Inhaled Poisons:

- Get the victim to fresh air immediately
- Open all windows and doors for fresh air
- Call the California Poison Control System

For Poisons on the Skin:

- Remove contaminated clothing
- Rinse the victim's skin with water for 20 minutes
- Call the California Poison Control System

For Poisons in the Eye:

- Flush the victim's eye with lukewarm water for about 20 minutes
- Do not force the eyelids open
- Call the California Poison Control System



\*\*\*Call 911 if the following life-threatening symptoms occur: uncontrollable shaking, unconsciousness, difficulty breathing. \*\*\*

**24-Hour Poison Emergency Phone Number  
1-800-222-1222**

Callers who are Deaf, hard of hearing or speech-disabled please dial 711 for assistance

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## Unit 2: Syrup of Ipecac

Syrup of Ipecac is a plant extract that was used to make a person vomit to partially empty a person's stomach after ingestion of a poison.

In 2003, The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued its new guideline on Syrup of Ipecac. The California Poison Control System agrees with the AAP guideline and recommends that Syrup of Ipecac should **no longer be used** as a home treatment for poisonings. Likewise, the American Association of Poison Control Centers no longer recommends this product. Instead, we recommend calling your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222.



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## Unit 3: Commonly Asked Questions

Q: When should I call the California Poison Control?

A: The California Poison Control can help the public or health professionals with questions and/or treatment advice about potentially poisonous substances 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Q: How much does it cost to call the poison center?

A: The call is FREE



Q: Who staffs the poison center emergency helpline?

A: The 24-hour emergency helpline is answered by highly trained staff who are pharmacists, nurses, and poison information specialists. In addition, a team of physicians who are board certified toxicologists are on staff for additional back-up around the clock.

Q: Is there more than one poison center in California?

A: No. The California Poison Control System is the official poison center for the state. The system is accredited by the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC).

For more FAQ please visit the resource center.

## Module 6: Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Poison Prevention Activities in Your Community

**Objective:** To learn how to easily and effectively share poison prevention information with your community.

**Unit 1:** Training Completion Next Steps and Resources

**Unit 2:** Preparing for an Event

**Unit 3:** Teaching Adults about Poisons

**Unit 4:** Reaching People with Limited Health Literacy

**Unit 5:** Teaching Children about Poisons

**Unit 6:** Program Evaluation

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## Unit 1: After Training Completion



After completing the California Poison Control System Training, you are encouraged to:

- Share poison prevention information with your family, friends, co-workers, and/or community by using educational materials provided to you in the resource center and at [www.calpoison.org](http://www.calpoison.org)
- Create awareness about the California Poison Control System
- Promote the toll-free helpline number 1-800-222-1222

**\*\*\* Please note: You should never answer poison specific and/or treatment questions or give treatment advice. All questions should be directed to the California Poison Control System where our trained specialists in poison information have access to the most up-to-date information. \*\*\***

After completing this training, you will have access to educational tools and materials.

Here are a few items you will receive for free:

- Certificate of Training Completion
- Free printed materials for events (available in 10 languages)
  - Please only order enough materials for your estimated audience
  - To order free printed materials, please visit [www.calpoison.org](http://www.calpoison.org) to access the [Health Education Materials Online Ordering](#) site
- Access to our online educational resource page

## Unit 2: Preparing for an Event

When planning poison prevention activities, the first question you need to consider is, “who am I trying to reach?” Programs are successful when the community’s needs are considered. Primary audiences include the community at risk of poisoning and secondary audiences include other community members. Your target audience can be anyone whom you wish to reach with poison prevention messages.

Children under the age of five are at greatest risk of unintentional poisoning and adults age 20-59 are at the greatest risk for unintentional poisoning deaths; therefore, children and those who provide care for them and adults age 20-59 should be our main targets.

The primary target audience for a poison prevention campaign may be one or more of the following:

- Children
- Teenagers/babysitters
- Adults/parents
- Grandparents
- Child care providers



Other target audiences you should try to reach are professional audiences, such as health care providers and the media. Parents and other caretakers of children often seek information and support from sources they deem reliable and credible such as doctors and pharmacists. Health care professionals are often in the position to disseminate health related information to their clients.

Examples of professional audiences you may want to target include:

- Pharmacists
- Nurses
- Pediatricians
- Emergency service personnel (EMTs, paramedics, police, firefighters)
- Child care providers
- Business owners
- Media (radio, television, newspaper, magazines and other publications)
- Legislators and community leaders



Identifying your target audience(s) and understanding their needs, interests and habits will help you determine the best methods to reach them with your poison prevention messages. Educating the public and professionals about the dangers of poisoning is our strongest link to preventing poisoning.

Sharing poison prevention information with your community is easy.

- Include the California Poison Control System materials into your existing teachings, trainings, and education/outreach activities
- Contact community organizations and ask how you can share/distribute poison prevention materials and information

Educational and Outreach Activities can include:

- Materials Distribution
- Health fairs
- Presentations
- Media Campaign
- Social Media (Facebook and Twitter)
- Newsletters
- Media Campaign
- National Poison Prevention Week
  - Established by the U.S. Congress on September 16, 1961 due to so many pediatric poisoning deaths in the 1950s
  - The third week in March, of every year
  - Provides a national opportunity to promote poison prevention education and alert the public about the problem
  - Activities and events scheduled around this week



#### Materials Distribution:

Distributing poison prevention materials at locations visited by your target audience is a way to reach your target audiences with poison prevention messages.



The California Poison Control System offers a variety of free poison prevention materials including brochures with magnets, poisonous plant posters, phone stickers, greeting cards and phone stickers for health professionals. Materials are also available in 10 languages. To order free printed materials, please visit [www.calpoison.org](http://www.calpoison.org) to access the [Health Education Materials Online Ordering](#) site.

Ideas for Distributing Poison Prevention Materials

- Ask pharmacists, nurses, physicians and other health care providers to distribute literature and/or counsel their patients about poisoning prevention
- Ask pharmacists to place education information in prescription bags
- Ask employers/businesses to place information in payroll or bills
- Put posters or information on bulletin boards or in windows of locations visited by your target audience
- Ask merchants to display posters and use bag stuffers for customers — include a poison safety message on store receipts or make loud speaker announcements
- Work with local area fast-food restaurants or chains to heighten awareness by printing up table tents and/or tray place mats

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## Participate in a Health Fair:

Hosting or participating in a health/safety fair or setting up a display at locations visited by your target audience is another great way to get the poison prevention message out. Please reach out to the Health Education Department via email at [healthed@calpoison.org](mailto:healthed@calpoison.org) to learn more about resources and displays available to promote the California Poison Control System.

Displays and exhibits can be set up at the following locations:

- Hospitals
- Clinics
- Shopping malls
- Baby stores
- Grocery and drug stores
- Libraries
- Pharmacies
- Schools
- Churches
- Community centers



Tips for Conducting a Health Fair/Exhibit:

- Try to remain standing throughout the event — if you must sit, sit either in front or to the side of your table
- Smile and greet all guests
- Ask guests if they have heard of the California Poison Control System
- Find out if guests have children under age 6 living at home or visit often
- Inform older adults that the California Poison Control System is available to answer any questions they might have about their medicines
- Encourage all guests to take a California Poison Control System brochure with magnet and/or telephone sticker, to ensure they have the telephone number at home in case of an emergency
- Use good presentation skills:
  - Speak slowly
  - Maintain eye contact with the guests
- Engage some guests in a poison look-a-like game
- Try to count the number of guests and record number
- If possible, distribute evaluation forms and collect them after they are completed
- Don't forget to thank each guest for visiting your exhibit
- When the event is over, pack up all left-over materials
- Provide any pertinent feedback from the surveys to the event organizer

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## Conduct a Presentation:

Conducting presentations in your community is a great way to reach people of all ages about poison prevention. Presentations should be designed in lecture/discussion format that can be delivered within 30 minutes to one hour. You should modify the length of your presentation for your target audience. The younger the audience the shorter your program should be.



To evaluate your program, distribute the pre-tests to your audience, give them time to complete them and collect them before you begin your program. Distribute the post-tests at the end of the program — forms can be found in the Resource Center.

Remember to request your free poison prevention materials early to ensure that you will receive them in time for your program. Also, remember to submit your monthly Activity Tracking Log to the California Poison Control System, which notes all completed community engagement activities you have participated in that month, including community presentations.

## Effective Presentation Tips:

- Know your audience
- Know your subject matter
- Speak, do not read
- Use appropriate body language
- Make it interesting
- Slice of life - Talk about real life poisoning cases and their outcomes
- Involve your audience
- Summarize, Summarize, Summarize

A list of effective presentation tips can be found in the Resource Center.



## Social Media:

Follow the California Poison Control System on social media and share, like, or comment on our posts. You can also post information on your Facebook page, send tweets via Twitter, and sign-up for weekly poison prevention text message tips.

- Like the California Poison Control System's [Facebook Page](#)
- Follow the California Poison Control System on Twitter [@poisoninfo](#)
- Sign-up for weekly poison prevention text message tips by texting "TIPS" to 20121 for messages in English. Text "PUNTOS" to receive information in Spanish.



## Place Information in Newsletters:

Use the information about poisoning and poison prevention found in the "Understanding the Poisoning Problem" section of this manual to produce articles for submission to various organizational and employer newsletters, community calendars, apartment or PTA updates, and church bulletins.

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### **Promote National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW):**

In September 1961, Public Law 87-139; 75 Stat. 681 (H. J. Res. 358) was passed authorizing the President of the United States to issue annually a proclamation designating the third week of March as National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW). During NPPW, the California Poison Control System and other organizations around the nation coordinate activities to increase awareness of the dangers of unintentional poisoning and teach poison prevention.

NPPW is a great time to implement one or more of the activities listed in this section. To learn more about NPPW-related activities, be sure to follow the California Poison Control System on Facebook, Twitter, and sign-up for poison prevention text message tips. You can also find more information by visiting the California Poison Control System website at [www.calpoison.org](http://www.calpoison.org).

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## Unit 3: Teaching Adults About Poisons

When teaching adults about poisons, the program should be based on current research and current poisoning data. The goal is to provide adults with the knowledge and skills to:

- Identify poisons
- Prevent poisonings
- Respond appropriately in poisoning emergencies

Programs for adults/older adults can be conducted at:

- Places of employment
- PTA meetings
- Neighborhood association meetings
- Civic and community/volunteer organization meetings
- Health departments
- Hospitals
- Senior centers



After each program, the participants should be able to:

- State the purpose of the program
- State examples of common poisons
- Describe risk factors associated with poisoning for children and adults
- Identify individuals at risk of poisoning
- List strategies to prevent poisonings in the home
- Repeat the phone number of the poison center
- Describe the appropriate response for poison emergencies
- Describe the services provided by the California Poison Control System
- Describe the information to give to the poison specialist

Adult lesson plans can be found in the resource center.

## Unit 4: Reaching People with Limited Health Literacy



Health Literacy is defined as the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

In order for a program to be effective, the audience must have access to information and must be able to understand what is being taught. Certain groups fall in the category of those with limited health literacy.

Those groups include:

- People with limited education
- People with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Minority populations
- Seniors/older adults
- Low-income families

Targeted audience must be reminded that poison specialists at the poison center can answer most medication questions and all calls are confidential; literature is available in other languages and that the poison center services are free.



Since you cannot tell that people have a literacy problem just by looking at them, you have to assume that in any audience you are trying to reach with safety messages, there are people with limited health proficiency. Therefore, it is important to interact with the audience — talk with the people. Understand that some people will prefer to talk instead of write; therefore, a pre/posttest might not be a useful tool for all audiences.

Barriers to Utilizing the Poison Center:

- Lack of awareness
- Lack of confidence (shyness, shame)
- No telephone
- Fear/lack of trust
- Language barriers
- Cultural differences
- 911 is easier to remember

Once again, know your audience and focus on them as consumers, learn about their barriers, and what they care about. This will assist in program planning and audience benefits.



## Unit 5: Teaching Children about Poisons

When teaching children about poisons, the program should be designed using age appropriate educational interactive methods to present key messages about poisoning.

The goal is to provide children with the knowledge and skills to:

- Identify poisons
- Prevent poisonings
- Respond appropriately in poisoning emergencies

Programs for children can be conducted at:

- Schools
- Scout meetings
- Child care centers
- Religious institutions
- Libraries
- After school programs



After each program, children should be able to:

- Define a poison
- Describe a poison (as something that should not be touched or tasted)
- Identify common poisons found in and around the home
- Identify “caution” words on household product container labels
- Explain the proper storage of poisons
- Describe when to take medicine
- Identify someone who gives you medicine
- Explain ways medicine and vitamins can be poisonous
- Explain why plants, flowers, berries, and mushrooms should not be eaten
- Describe the appropriate response in a poison emergency
- Identify the number to call in a poison emergency

Children lesson plans can be found in the Resource Center.

## Unit 6: Program Evaluation

The final step in planning and implementing a poison prevention activity is to evaluate your activities. Evaluating your activities will allow the California Poison Control System to see what you have accomplished.

Evaluation Helps To:

- Ensure that your program does what it is intended to do
- Identify errors and problems and make improvements
- Identify activities that are successful so you can reuse them in the future
- Gain recognition and credibility as a poison prevention advocate
- Plan future programs

Evaluations contain questions designed to gather information about your program.

## Program Evaluation

Please share your thoughts about our Poison Prevention Program!

Date of Program: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Has your knowledge about poison prevention increased as a result of completing this program?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If No, explain:

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2. Do you feel adequately prepared to handle a poisoning emergency as a result of completing this program?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If No, explain

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3. Did this program meet your expectations? Why or why not?

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4. Which area (s) were most helpful?

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5. Which area (s) can be improved upon, and how?

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Thank you so much for your time!

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