



1-800-222-1222 A DAY IN THE LIFE of the BLUE RIDGE POISON CENTER

Are you curious about who calls the Blue Ridge Poison Center, and why?

Our poison center serves over *2.4 million people* from 54 counties of Virginia (*see our territory*). Each year, our poison specialists handle an average of *58,000 calls*. A call can last anywhere from a few seconds to over 20 minutes. Most of the time, callers can be guided to treat their poisoning at home, avoiding a costly trip to the doctor.

The table below lists real calls from a real 24 hour period -- chosen at random from the past. All personal details have been removed to protect our callers' privacy. The people who answer calls are nurses and doctors who are specially trained to treat all sorts of poisonings: from medicines, plants, household products, industrial chemicals, envenomations, and more. *Click here to meet our experts.*

In addition to the 94 incoming calls listed below, **our specialists also made 54 outgoing calls**. We routinely follow up with our clients to see if their condition has changed and further advice is necessary.

Understandably, callers are often frightened, embarrassed, or worried. Sometimes they are sick or in pain. We are here to help: 24 hours a day, every single day. Our services are completely confidential and FREE.

HOURL	SCENARIO
6:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A 61 year old woman called after discovering she accidentally took her morning medications twice.
7:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A mother called when her 4 year old grabbed a bottle of fiber tablets from the kitchen table and ate 14-18 of them while the mother was making breakfast.
8:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A woman called after discovering she had just taken her husband's prescribed medicine instead of her own by mistake.▪ A man called because his dog chewed open his bottle of seizure medication and ate 10 tablets.▪ A mother called because she gave her toddler his morning dose of liquid antibiotic medicine, left the room briefly, then returned to discover he had drunk the rest of the bottle contents.

HOUR	SCENARIO
9:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An occupational health nurse for a large manufacturing company called to ask about the toxicity of potassium bromide, which they use in their facility. ▪ A Mother called when her 2 year old ate a “handful” of chewable vitamins that looked like gummy candy. ▪ A 57 year old woman called because she accidentally took her daily dose of diabetes medication twice. ▪ A school nurse called when a 16 year old student drank an entire bottle of hand sanitizer “to get drunk.”

Between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon, 8 medical residents attended a presentation on antidotes in our classroom. Each year, over 4,000 residents and students of nursing, medicine, and pharmacy, as well as health care professionals working in Virginia, are taught by one of our boarded medical toxicologists.

10:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A teacher called to discuss poisoning prevention teaching ideas for her 3rd grade students. ▪ A 78 year old woman called because she had been treating herself with over-the-counter cough and cold medicine “all day long.” Now she can’t remember how much of each product she has taken, and she feels worse, not better. ▪ A doctor’s office called to order some free poison center stickers and magnets to give to their patients. ▪ A school nurse called about a 1st grader whose gel ink pen broke open in her mouth while she was chewing on it. ▪ An emergency room doctor called about a 14 year old. Her parents heard her fall in the bathroom after passing out while inhaling concentrated amounts of air freshener to get “high.” She appears dazed and agitated.
11:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A daycare provider called when she discovered a toddler sucking on an uncapped dry-erase marker. ▪ A child drank apple juice that had been sitting out all night, and is now vomiting. Her parents called wondering if she could have food poisoning. ▪ A father called to report he placed his high blood pressure medicine pill next to his glass of juice, got distracted, and now cannot find the pill. He is worried either the 21-month old child or the family dog ate it and wants to know what symptoms he should look for. ▪ A caller accidentally splashed gasoline in his eyes, and is experiencing a lot of eye pain.
12:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A babysitter called when a 4 year old gave his 1 year old brother bubble solution to drink, and then the 1 year old vomited. ▪ A man called for information about how to safely dispose of some expired medications. ▪ A Mother called who thought her child was bitten by a stinkbug, and wanted to know if they are poisonous.

1:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents of a toddler called to ask questions about their son’s lead level. He was tested at his last doctor’s visit, and the level was 8. They want to know if this is normal, and how to keep him safe from lead. ▪ An emergency room doctor called for recommendations in treating a 23 year old man whose friends called the rescue squad after he took “half a bottle” of pain medicine and drank a lot of beer to ease his knee pain. ▪ A television news reporter called to request an interview with one of our doctors about nationwide reports of a synthetic marijuana product causing health problems among users. ▪ A pediatrician called to get more information about the chemical contents of a certain brand of furniture polish, which one of his patients swallowed. The child vomited once and is now coughing.
2:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A 15 month old’s grandmother called after the child was found playing with a discarded bottle of hair dye from the trash. Dye is all over the child’s face, in his eyes, and in his mouth. ▪ A woman used a flea bomb in her apartment, but forgot to cover up the salt and pepper. She called to ask if she should throw them away. ▪ A father called when his 2 year old was found with an open bottle of Super Glue®. The child’s fingers are stuck together and he may have tasted the glue. ▪ A school nurse called about a child who, on a dare, ate an unidentified mushroom found on the playground. ▪ A woman called after she ate some peaches and then realized her roommate had sprayed them with bug spray.
3:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The organizer of an upcoming county-wide health fair called to invite someone from the poison center to attend and set up a display table. ▪ An emergency room nurse called about a 39 year old woman who was in a lot of pain after being bitten on the finger by a black widow spider that was hiding in a flower pot. ▪ School officials called about a 7th grader who snorted powdered lemonade mix up his nose with a straw. ▪ A mother called when she discovered her toddler playing in some boric acid powder which had been sprinkled under the sink to control roaches. ▪ A pediatrician called to get advice on treating a 6 year old patient whose face and eyes are swollen and painful following exposure to smoke from burning brush that may have contained poison ivy.

Each year, the Blue Ridge Poison Center offers poisoning prevention education and outreach to thousands of people of all ages; through health fairs, presentations, workshops, classroom activities, and more. Today, our Public Health Educator travelled to address a group of 24 Assisted Living Facility workers about preventing poisoning in senior citizens.

4:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A local fire department called from the scene of an industrial accident in which a pipe containing aluminum powder exploded. Approximately 50 people have been exposed to the contents. ▪ An emergency room doctor called for recommendations in treating a 19 year old woman who, after a fight with her boyfriend, swallowed 20 unknown tablets in an attempt to harm herself. ▪ A pharmacist referred a call from parents of a 3 year old who tasted some muscle pain relief cream. ▪ A man called after his 3 year old son drank paint thinner that had been poured into a soda bottle and left in the garage.
5:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A man called for help when his dog licked some spilled rust remover off the ground. ▪ A mother called when she discovered an empty bottle of children's pain reliever in her 4 year old son's room. She had no idea if...or when...he ate any of them. ▪ A man called because he just got home from having his routine prescription filled at a local pharmacy, but the pills look different than those he is used to taking. ▪ A father called because his 2 year old licked spackle from a putty knife. ▪ A woman called while on vacation. She keeps liquid laundry detergent in a small unmarked bottle in her suitcase, and her young daughter just tasted it. ▪ A caller wanted to know if it will be safe to take her prescription diabetes medicine with an over-the-counter pain reliever.
6:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A caller had heard that grapefruit juice interacts poorly with some medications, and wanted to know if she can drink it with the prescription medicine she takes. ▪ A 3 year old's mother called when he swallowed all of the toothpaste she put on his toothbrush instead of spitting it out. ▪ A parent called about a toddler who drank from a bottle of GooGone®. ▪ A man called who thought he had a rock in his shoe, but discovered it was actually a lump of potassium permanganate, which he uses at work. The chemical had eaten through his sock and was causing a lot of pain on his foot. ▪ A mother called whose 12 month old had just sprayed perfume in his eyes and mouth, and was now rubbing his face and crying. ▪ A man called because he was smoking a cigarette and accidentally swallowed a small bead in the middle between the filter and the tobacco. He called the cigarette company and they told him it was made of gelatin and menthol. ▪ A father called when he discovered his 23 month old child "staggering around" and was worried she may have drunk part of his vodka tonic.

7:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A caller's 12 year old niece was feeling nauseous and "woozy" after riding in a car that had gasoline spilled on the floor. ▪ A doctor called to ask about a 20 month old patient who had drunk water from the vaporizer in his room. The child's parents had added Vick's VapoSteam® to the water. ▪ A health department administrator called to get poisoning statistics for her particular county. ▪ Police called with concerns about a man in their custody who swallowed a bag of unknown white powder during a traffic stop. ▪ Parents called after discovering their 2 young children playing with a bottle of laxative tablets. The children managed to open the child resistant bottle and pills were spilled everywhere; it was unclear if they swallowed any. ▪ A woman called to ask if she could safely give her own prescription pain medicine to her son, who sprained his back at work today. ▪ A babysitter called when the 3 children came in from playing outdoors with purple stains all over their hands and faces. They told her they found some berries that "tasted good."
8:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A caller noticed the contents of his EpiPen were cloudy, and wanted to know if he should throw it away. ▪ A 69 year old woman called after accidentally swallowing her hearing aid battery. ▪ A mother called about a 16 month old who got nail polish in his mouth and eyes. ▪ A parent called when their 1 year old pulled a bottle of ear drops from the diaper bag and drank some. ▪ A man called to say his entire family had been nauseous and had bad headaches all day. He thought they had the flu. But he just saw a news story on TV about a family who had carbon monoxide poisoning from a leaky furnace duct, and wondered if his family might be experiencing the same thing. ▪ A caller stated that she gave her boyfriend 12 of her allergy pills, with instructions to take one a day, but he misunderstood and took all of them. ▪ A caller wanted to know if acorns are poisonous to humans. ▪ An emergency room doctor called for advice about a 5 year old who swallowed up to 20 tablets of over-the-counter pain reliever. The child was left alone with her 7 year old sister while the mother went to the store. The mother came home to discover they had been playing "nurse" and the 7 year old had given the younger child "medicine."
9:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff from an assisted living facility called with concerns about a 92 year old client with Alzheimer's disease after discovering she had been eating the houseplant in her room. ▪ A mother called after realizing her 6 year old drank from a cup of ice water whose ice cubes had been picked up off the floor with a baby wipe. ▪ Paramedics called from a home where two 14 year old friends each swallowed 10 tablets of over-the-counter cough medicine to get "high." Parents discovered the girls unable to stay awake. The girls also have very slow heart rates and dilated pupils. ▪ A father called to ask if the contents of an ice pack were poisonous. His daughter got the contents all over her hands and was now sucking her thumb. ▪ A police officer called to identify some pills he found while searching a car at the scene of an accident. ▪ A caller reported that the fish she bought yesterday smells like ammonia. Should she eat it? ▪ A mother called because her 4 year old son was chewing on a glow-stick and it burst open in his mouth.

10:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A college student called about her roommate who drank 5 Red Bulls® and several cups of coffee to stay up late studying for a test. Now the roommate is vomiting and has tremors. ▪ A woman called for instructions on safely disposing of her expired medications. ▪ A mother called after she gave her 5 year old son two different medicines for his cough, then worried they might interact poorly. ▪ An emergency room doctor needed advice in treating a 16 month old baby boy found chewing on a discarded nicotine skin patch found in the trash can. ▪ A mother called about her 2 year old daughter. The mother left a vial of tea tree oil open in the bathroom. Now her child's breath smells like it. She cannot determine how much is missing from the bottle. ▪ A police officer called for help identifying some pills found during a raid on a suspected illegal drug dealer's property.
11:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An emergency room doctor called for help treating a teenager. The boy had been taking out the trash in the dark while wearing flip-flops, and was bitten on the foot by what his parents believe was a copperhead snake. The boy's ankle is swollen and very painful. ▪ A woman called to ask if it would be safe to take an over-the-counter sleep aid after drinking a few glasses of wine. ▪ A caller wants to know if chocolate is poisonous to cats; her cat just ate a brownie. ▪ A hospital called about a toddler in their care who was removed by police and social workers from a home containing an illicit meth lab. Medical staff wants to know what he may have been exposed to, and what symptoms to look for.
12:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A caller was worried about his dog who ate a dead mouse. The mouse died from eating rat poison. ▪ A woman called when she accidentally broke a compact fluorescent bulb. She heard they contained mercury and wanted to know how to safely clean up the mess. ▪ Emergency room staff called about a patient who is 9 months pregnant and reportedly swallowed a large amount of her prescription depression medicine in an attempt to harm herself. The ER wants to know about treating the mother and also the fetus.
1:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A woman called after her visiting mother accidentally brushed her teeth with the baby's diaper rash cream. ▪ EMS called from the home of a 73 year old woman whose family discovered had taken 2 sleep aids at bedtime, then another 6 or so an hour later "when they didn't work." The woman is confused and unable to stay awake.
2:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A man called when he realized he had misread the directions on his prescription medicine. It said "take 1 tablet every 4 hours for 3 days." He had been taking 4 tablets every 3 hours.
3:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A man called because he took a sip of household pine cleaner by mistake when he reached for what he thought was his water bottle in the dark. He made himself vomit, and now is experiencing a lot of throat pain.
4:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A Deputy Sheriff called about an inmate who drank an entire bottle of rubbing alcohol and an entire bottle of mouthwash and is now vomiting blood.
5:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An emergency room doctor called to consult about a 5 year old who has had insomnia and hallucinations for 5 days after receiving anesthesia for eye surgery.