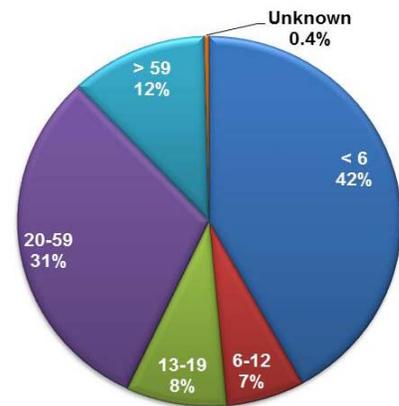


Poisoning is a leading cause of injury hospitalization and injury death in the U.S. ¹ In 2017, the Blue Ridge Poison Center (BRPC) handled nearly 20,000 calls about people coming into contact with harmful substances. An additional 3,000 people called the BRPC to ask a question or get information. All callers were helped by our team of experts—nurses and doctors with extensive training in treating poisonings—who manage the **PoisonHelp Hotline** 24 hours a day, every single day. Calls are free and confidential. Program the number into your phone today! **1-800-222-1222**.



AGE OF PATIENTS

Children under age 6 were responsible for the most calls—42%. Why so many? Young children are at risk for poisoning because they don't know the difference between things that are safe to eat or drink and things that are harmful. Their natural curiosity may lead them to touch or swallow substances which can hurt them.



However, most of the more serious poisoning cases involved adolescents and adults. In fact, *9 out of 10 poisoning deaths in the U.S. happened to adults over age 20...not to children.* Many of these deaths were the result of accidental overdoses of medicine.

TOP 12 SUBSTANCES--All Ages	CASES
Analgesics (pain relievers)	2,730
Sedative/hypnotics/antipsychotics	1,704
Cosmetics & personal care products	1,649
Cleaning substances	1,560
Antidepressants	1,395
Cardiovascular drugs	1,109
Antihistamines	1,070
Foreign bodies/toys/miscellaneous	819
Anticonvulsants	817
Alcohols	783
Pesticides	686
Stimulants and street drugs	637

WHAT SUBSTANCES WERE INVOLVED?

Sixty percent of poisoning exposure calls were about medicines, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter medicines, and supplements (such as vitamins or herbal products). Medicine poisoning can happen when someone takes too much, takes the wrong product by mistake, takes medicine not prescribed for them, or takes the wrong combination of products.

The remaining 40% of exposure calls were about non-medicine substances. Most of these substances were products commonly found in and around our homes such as pesticides, cleaning products, alcohol, automotive products, etc. Nearly 4% of exposure calls were about poisons found in nature, including plants, berries, mushrooms, snakes, and spiders.

The #1 source of exposures for children under age 6 was cosmetics and personal care products. Examples include mouthwash, make up, skin creams, hair care products, perfume, etc. Adults may unintentionally leave these products on bathroom counters, kitchen tables, in diaper bags or purses, under cabinets, or other places easily accessible by children.

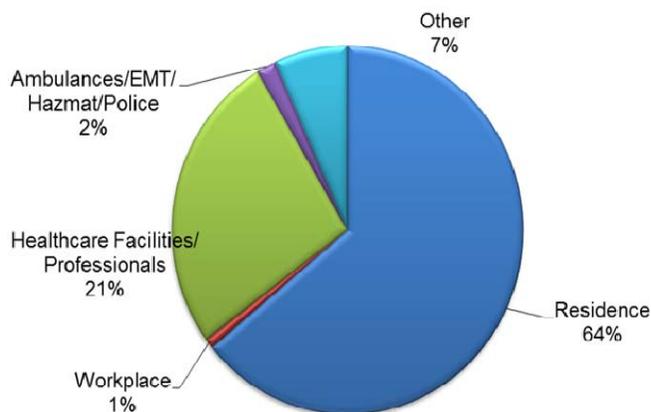


WHO CALLED THE BLUE RIDGE POISON CENTER?

Most calls —67%—came from the home of someone living within our region. However our region also contains 48 hospitals and numerous other health care facilities; 28% of our calls came from health care providers seeking our expert advice on managing their own poisoned patients. A small fraction of our calls (7%) came from a school, workplace, or other location.



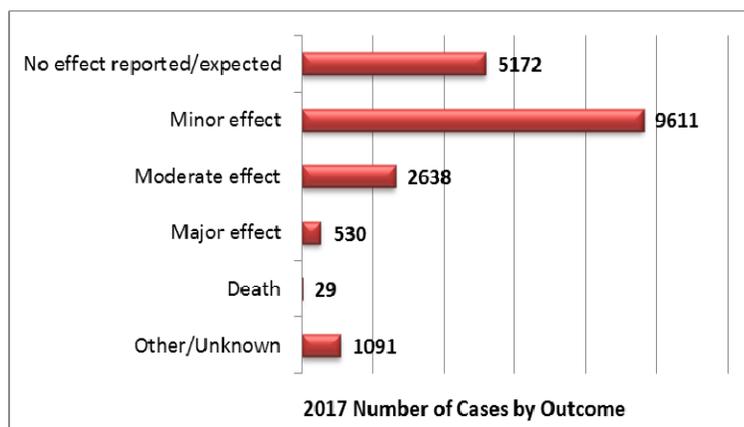
Counties in white are served by the BRPC



OUTCOMES: WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR CALLERS?

With guidance from our experts, 77% of callers experienced no or minor health effects. When you select those who were calling from home, work, or other non-healthcare site, the number grows to 82%. Helping callers treat their exposure on site saves time, worry, and money by preventing unnecessary trips to a healthcare facility.

When our experts determined that a poisoning did need medical attention, they referred a caller to a nearby healthcare facility and helped monitor that patient until the case was resolved.



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Poisoning is preventable! The Blue Ridge Poison Center has a full time health educator who provides public education materials and programs to teach poisoning prevention for people of all ages in the BRPC region. Examples of our 2017 education and outreach accomplishments include:



- Routinely shared poisoning prevention news and tips through Twitter, Facebook, and our website.
- Released 4 issues of *The Antidote*, our free newsletter.
- Gave 46 presentations, including 3 live webinars.
- Distributed over 255,000 free items including magnets, wallet cards, and posters.
- BRPC clinicians helped teach more than 150 medical personnel-in-training about managing poisoning exposures.
- The BRPC partnered with many agencies and groups including Lead Safe Virginia, Old Rag Master Naturalists, and the Critical Incident Analysis Group.

¹ 10 Leading Causes of Injury Deaths by Age Group Highlighting Unintentional Injury Deaths, United States – 2015. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Accessed July 2017 from <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/LeadingCauses.html>