

In 2024, the Blue Ridge Poison Center (BRPC) handled **over 16,000 calls** about people with known or suspected exposures to harmful substances. Most calls (64%) were because of unintentional exposures. Nearly 23% of calls were because of intentional exposures including suicide gestures and the misuse or abuse of substances. An additional 1,580 people called to ask a non-emergency question about poisons or poison safety. All callers were helped by our team of experts: nurses and doctors with extensive knowledge about treating poisonings. The BRPC provided this free, confidential service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

What Ages Were Affected by Poisoning?

Children under age 6 were responsible for 34% of exposures (figure 1). Young children are at risk for poisoning for many reasons. They cannot tell the difference between what is safe and what is dangerous. They put everything into the mouth. Their natural curiosity leads them handle or swallow substances which can harm them, especially if they look or smell like familiar treats.

The largest number of cases (48%) were about adults age 20 and up. Many of these cases were the result of medicine mistakes or overdoses.

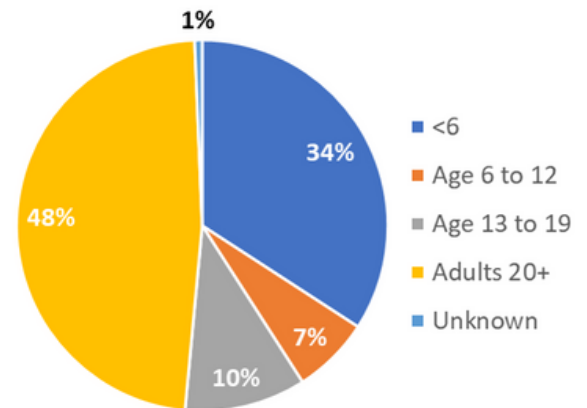


Figure 1: 2024 Age of Patient

Top 20 Substances	Cases
Analgesics	2,060
Antidepressants	1,434
Cardiovascular drugs	1,098
Sedative/hypnotics/antipsychotics	1,080
Cleaning substances (household)	1,011
Antihistamines	1,002
Alcohols	932
Cosmetics/personal care products	749
Stimulants and street drugs	747
Anticonvulsants	605
Foreign bodies/toys/miscellaneous	561
Pesticides	494
Hormones and hormone antagonists	475
Dietary supplements/herbals	451
Chemicals	412
Plants	400
Cold and cough preparations	343
Gastrointestinal preparations	343
Vitamins	341
Topical preparations	340

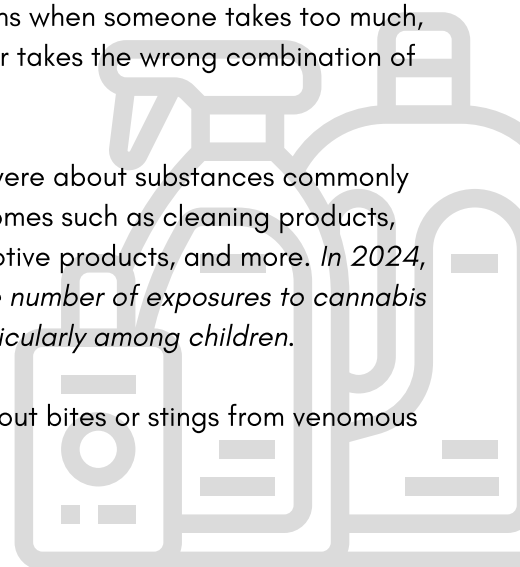
Table 1: 2024 Top 20 Substances

What Substances Were Involved?

Sixty-four percent of exposures were about medicines (table 1). This includes prescription medication, over-the-counter products, and supplements such as herbals and vitamins. Medicine poisoning happens when someone takes too much, takes the wrong product, or takes the wrong combination of products.

Thirty-six percent of calls were about substances commonly found in and around our homes such as cleaning products, pesticides, alcohol, automotive products, and more. *In 2024, we saw a huge spike in the number of exposures to cannabis and cannabis edibles, particularly among children.*

Nearly 2% of calls were about bites or stings from venomous snakes, spiders, bees, etc.



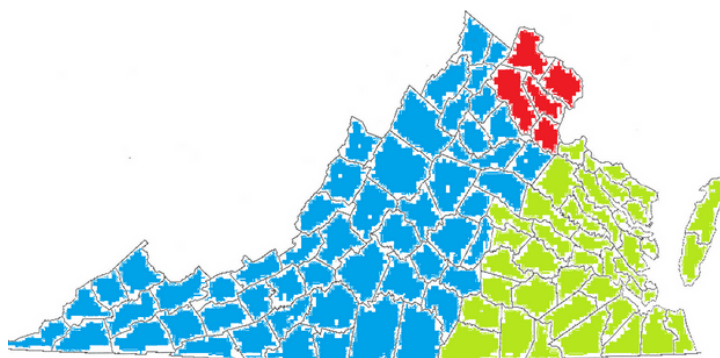


Figure 2: 2024 Poison Center Service Area

Who Called the BRPC?

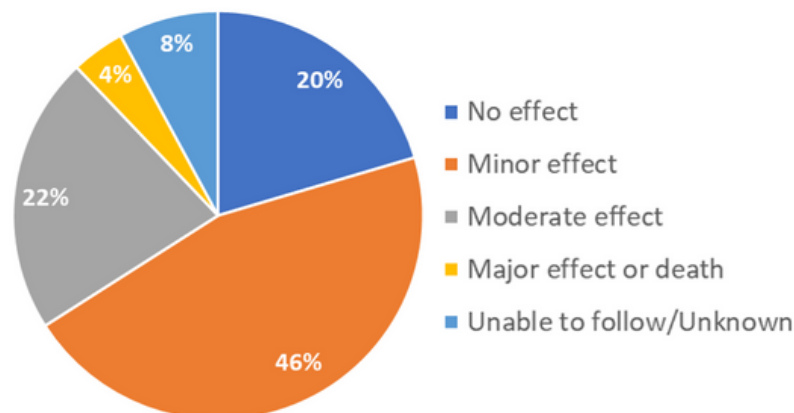
The BRPC is located in Charlottesville, VA and is affiliated with University of Virginia Health. It is certified as a regional poison center by [America's Poison Centers](#). In 2024, we answered Poison Help calls from the cities and counties shown in blue in figure 2. In March of 2025, our service area expanded to include some of the cities and counties shown in red. We expect this to greatly increase our call volume in 2025.

Healthcare providers use the Poison Help hotline, too. In 2024, **34% of calls** came from a hospital, clinic, first responder, pharmacy, or other healthcare provider seeking expert advice in helping their own patients and clients.

Medical Outcomes

With guidance from our experts, 2 out of every 3 callers experienced no or minor health effects as a result of their exposure (Fig. 3). *Helping callers treat their exposure on site saves time, worry, and money by preventing unnecessary trips to a healthcare facility.* Twenty-two percent of callers experienced moderate health effects—some requiring medical care. In 2024, 615 cases resulted in major health effects; there were 6 deaths.

Figure 3: Medical Outcome of Cases



Education and Outreach

In 2024, the BRPC's public education program distributed more than 180,000 materials; developed new videos and other virtual resources; published quarterly newsletters (*The Antidote*); participated in health fairs and gave educational presentations; designed toolkits for teachers and group leaders; and maintained a robust website and social media presence. All resources are free.

BRPC clinicians educated numerous healthcare professionals and students through the UVA School of Medicine's Medical Toxicology Rotation and the two-year Medical Toxicology Fellowship program. Additionally, monthly newsletters (*ToxTalks*) for healthcare providers were distributed. For more information visit the [UVA Division of Medical Toxicology](#).