



the Virginia Poison Center

services



- Provides 24-hour **emergency information and advice** over the phone to the public. Calls often involve treatment advice for accidental and self-poisoning with drugs or chemicals; exposures to plants and pesticides; poisonous bites by animals or insects; food poisoning; drug abuse or withdrawal; and occupational or environmental exposure to chemicals.
- Serves as a 24-hour **resource for physicians and other health care professionals** at area hospitals by providing the latest treatment information.
- **Clinical Toxicologists provide direct patient care** through phone and bedside consultations and outpatient evaluation is available with referral.
- **Trains healthcare professionals in medical toxicology**, the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic poisoning.
- **Prevents unintentional poisonings** through public education by developing and promoting poison prevention materials and programs.
- **Collects and analyzes data** to identify poison hazards and trends.
- **Improves domestic preparedness** through active participation in the Richmond Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) and other public safety venues. VPC toxicologists provide expertise and resources for response to hazardous material incidents, including the use of chemicals as weapons of mass destruction.

mission statement

The mission of the Virginia Poison Center is to improve the health and safety of Virginians throughout our service area by reducing the frequency and severity of human poisoning.

Fast help for poisonings is our most important service.

The average call to VPC is completed in five minutes. This compares very well to the average wait time in an Emergency Department.



VIRGINIA POISON CENTER



average VPC call

5 minutes

VS

3.7 hours

average ER wait

EMERGENCY 911



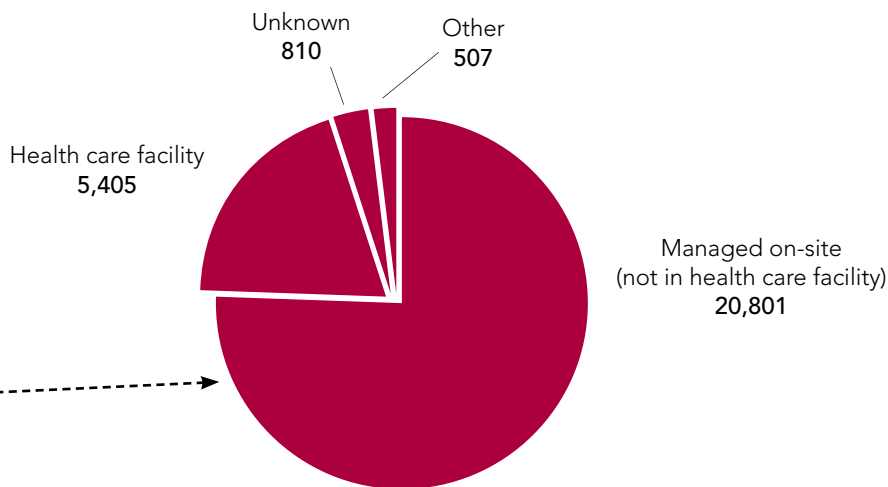
TOTAL HUMAN POISONINGS

26,441

TREATMENT SITES

Three-quarters of our patients are treated safely and successfully without the need for a doctor's care.

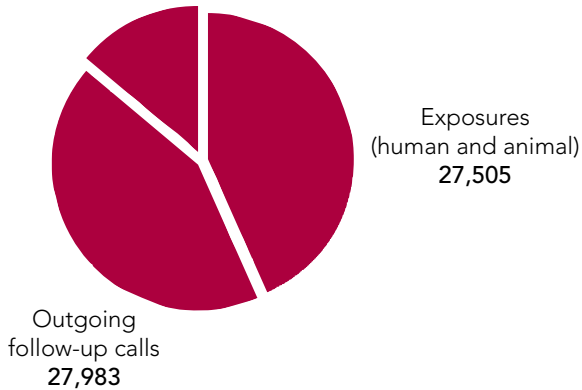
76% of those exposed to poisons were treated at home, or at the site of exposure.



TOTAL CALL VOLUME

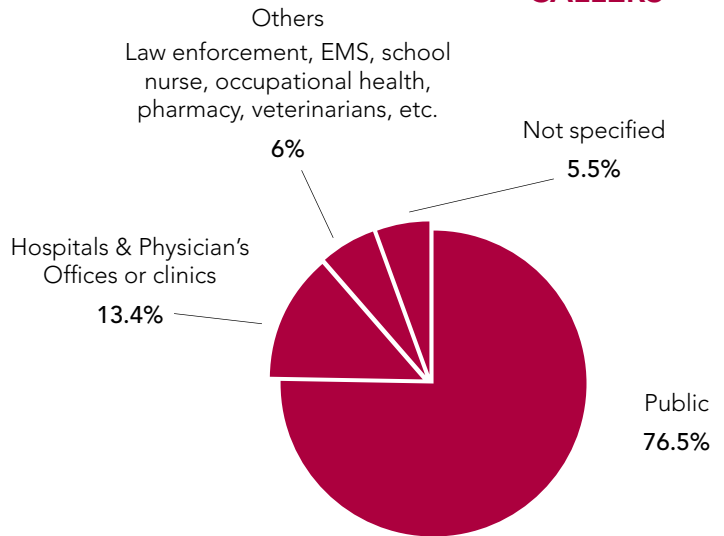
64,404

Information requests
8,916



All calls are handled by a specialist in poison information, all of whom are Registered Nurses.

CALLERS



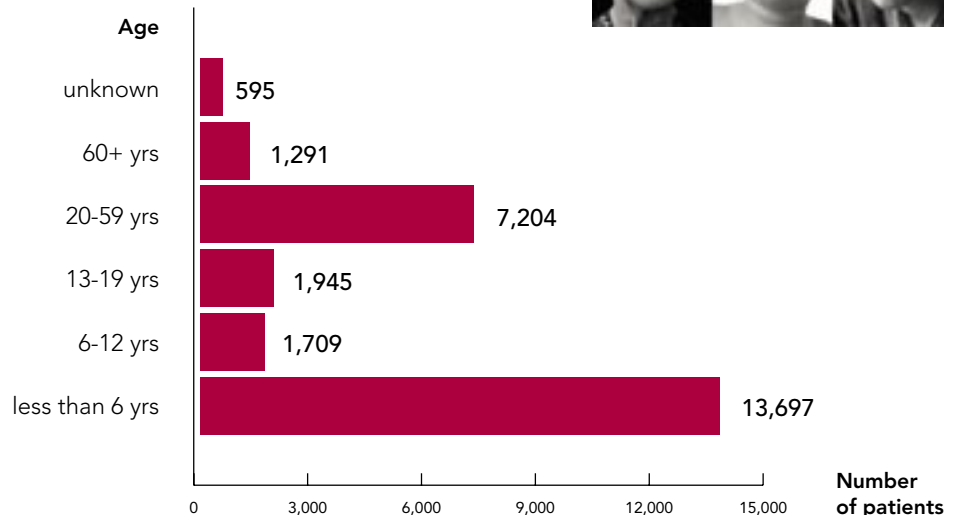
FOLLOW UP

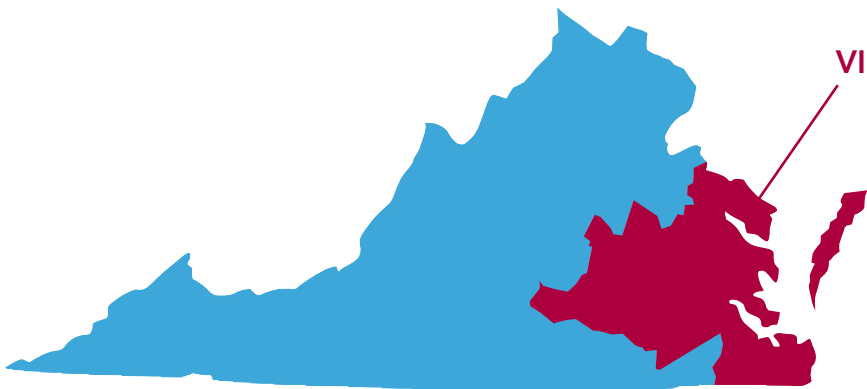
Our nurses made at least one follow up call to 40% of all our patients. Such return calls are placed to evaluate the patient's progress, answer any questions and offer reassurance.

They contribute to the safety of treating patients without sending them to a health care facility. In 2005, a total of **27,983 follow up calls** were made by VPC staff.

PATIENT AGE RANGE

Poisoning remains one of the most common childhood injuries. About 50% of the VPC's patients are young children. However, there were NO deaths in this age group. Severe and fatal poisonings are much more frequent among adults.





VIRGINIA POISON CENTER SERVICE REGION

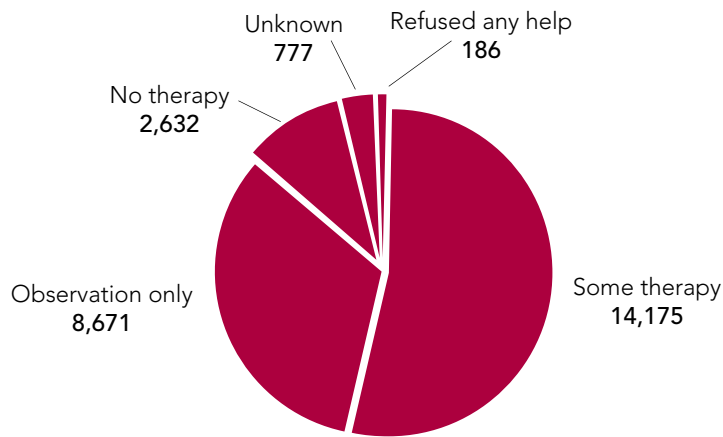
Health care professionals may call the VPC for advice when treating complicated or serious poisoning in children or adults. Physicians and nurses at the thirty seven acute care facilities within our service region contacted the

VPC to request assistance in treating 5,400 patients who needed our expertise in clinical toxicology. This table lists the hospitals that consulted the VPC most often in 2005.

Health care facility	# patients
VCU Medical Center	754
Chippenham/Johnston Willis	464
Riverside Regional (Newport News)	223
Maryview	217
Naval Medical Center (Portsmouth)	193
St. Mary's	189
John Randolph	168
Sentara Leigh (Norfolk)	163
Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters	212
Southside Community (Farmville)	152
Southside Regional Medical Center (Petersburg)	147
Chesapeake	139

TREATMENTS

Patients exposed to a poison required careful evaluation, or treatment of some kind, in 87% of the VPC's cases during 2005. Decontamination - the removal of the toxin from the patient - was the most frequently administered treatment.



OUTCOMES

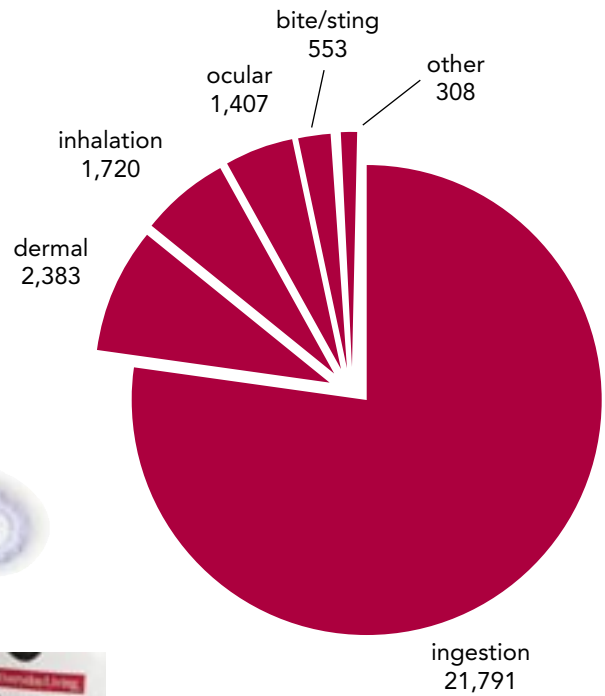
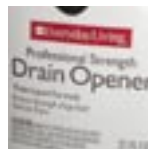
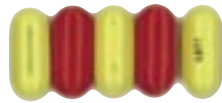
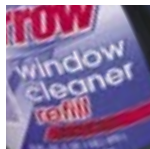
The immediate help of the poison center contributes to the generally good outcomes of our poison exposure cases. Almost 90% of patients experienced either no toxic effect, or a minor effect only, with expert treatment advice from the VPC.

outcome	number	% of exposures
No effect	8,299	31.10
Minor effect	15,264	57.90
Moderate effect	1,222	4.60
Major effect	204	0.77
death	14	
unrelated effect	791	3.00
unknown	644	2.50



ROUTE OF EXPOSURE

Poisons can contact the body by many different routes. Ingestion is the most familiar, and the most common. Other common routes are inhalation and dermal (skin contact).



SUBSTANCES

Poisons are chemical substances that may cause injury when they come into contact with the human body. In 2005, about 53% of human poison exposures reported to the VPC involved a medication, or pharmaceutical substance. Non-pharmaceutical poisons include a very wide variety of substances: heavy

metals, pesticides, plants, cleaners, fumes or gases, venom of insects or snakes, and thousands of others. This table lists the substances most commonly involved in poison exposures in 2005. *Note: This list does not describe the substances that caused the most serious poisonings.*



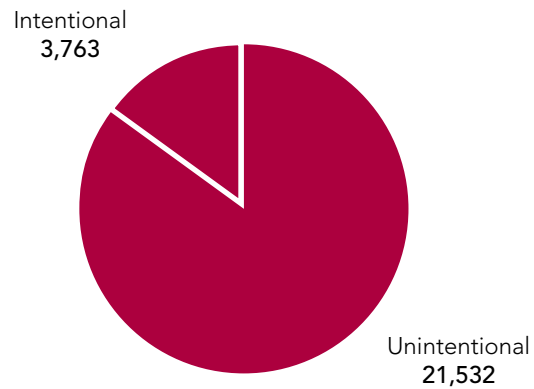
Pharmaceutical	Human Exposures	Non - Pharmaceutical	Human Exposures
Analgesics	3,180	Cosmetics/Personal Care Products	2,582
Cold and cough medications	1,546	Cleaning Products (household)	2,200
Sedative/hypnotic/antipsychotic.....	1,464	Foreign bodies	1,436
Topical (skin) medications	1,304	Pesticides	1,094
Antidepressants.....	1,154	Alcohols.....	945
Antihistamines.....	950	Food products/food poisoning	721
Heart medications.....	873	Plants.....	680
Antimicrobials (antibiotics).....	771	Bites & envenomations	613
Vitamins.....	703	Hydrocarbons.....	586
Stimulants & street drugs.....	595	Chemical products (miscellaneous).....	565
Hormones.....	570	Arts/crafts/office supply chemicals	510





REASON FOR EXPOSURE

Most of the poisonings reported to the VPC are unintentional, or "accidental". Childhood poisonings, as well as environmental and occupational exposures, are included in this category. By contrast, although only 14% of exposures were intentional these were responsible for 93% of fatalities in 2005.



FATALITIES

The Center was consulted in 14 deaths this year due to poisoning. Thirteen were intentional, 1 was an unintentional, occupational exposure.

Age (years)	Gender	Substance(s)	Reason
38	F	Acetaminophen • Alcoholic beverage	intentional
32	M	Cocaine • Methadone	intentional
39	M	Tylenol PM • Alcoholic beverage	intentional
37	F	unknown	intentional
44	M	Acetaminophen	intentional
46	M	Cocaine	intentional
Adult	M	Hydrogen sulfide	unintentional
44	F	Acetaminophen	intentional
48	F	Acetaminophen	intentional
56	M	Percocet • Acetaminophen • Alcoholic beverage	intentional
27	M	Antifreeze (Ethylene glycol)	intentional
65	M	Salicylates	intentional
70	M	Xanax • Alcoholic beverage	intentional
15	F	Aluminum phosphide	intentional



POISON PREVENTION PROGRAMS



Most calls to the Virginia Poison Center are for advice about an unintentional poisoning. The vast majority of these unfortunate incidents would have been preventable. An integral part of the center's mission is to make the public aware of steps they can take to prevent serious injury from poisons. The center responds to requests from schools, civic groups, employers, child care centers, and state and local agencies, and provides a variety of programs on poison prevention. The VPC is represented at many community events such as health fairs, where our displays, magnets and printed materials with information on poison safety reach thousands of attendees. During 2005, the VPC participated in 121 of these educational events attended by more than 39,000 Virginians, distributing more than 400,000 pieces of printed educational materials.

National Poison Prevention Week is observed annually during the third week of March to focus attention on the need to prevent unintentional poisoning. The VPC partners with local and state groups in a variety of activities to promote the observance each year.



POISON
HelpTM
1-800-222-1222



PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Accurate diagnosis and treatment for acute toxic exposures requires very specialized knowledge and skills which are not often emphasized in the education of most medical professionals. The VPC teaches the specialty of clinical toxicology to physicians and other health care professionals. Through lectures, consultations and daily patient care rounds, resident physicians at the VCU Medical Center receive training to enhance their ability to care for patients who have been poisoned. The VPC is a clinical rotation site for physicians who are specializing in emergency medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, psychiatry, preventative medicine, and pathology, as well as for pharmacy residents in internal medicine and critical care. No other clinical area provides such opportunities to improve proficiency in toxicology to a variety of health care professionals.



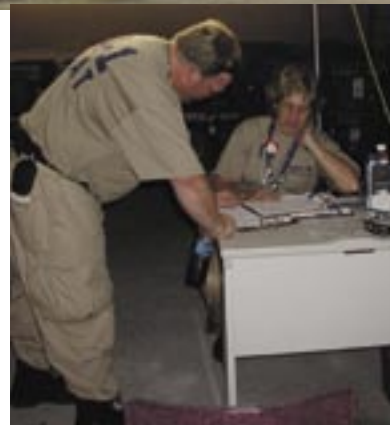
*Response to Hurricane Katrina:
Virginia-1 Disaster Medical
Assistance Team on a two-week
mission to the Gulf Coast.*



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Staff members were invited speakers at regional and state events addressing health care professionals on a broad range of clinical toxicology topics. A special focus on emergency response to hazardous materials and chemical weapons involved our staff in collaborative efforts with a variety of government agencies. Emergency medical technicians and other prehospital care providers attended VPC training to enhance their abilities to care for victims of acute toxic exposures.

The VPC Director is a charter member of the Virginia-1 Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), providing pharmacy and toxicology leadership to the team. In only its second year, VA-1 DMAT deployed six times in 2005, including a two-week mission to the gulf coast following Hurricane Katrina.



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Ben Vedomske RN,CSPI



***CSPI - Certified Specialist in Poison Information**

Specialists in poison information are the individuals who staff the emergency phone lines 24 hours daily. These are experienced registered nurses who have received additional training in the evaluation and treatment of toxic exposures. They have earned the CSPI designation by successfully passing a national board certification examination in this specialty field.



Virginia Poison Center

Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center
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Phone: (804) 828-4780
Fax: (804) 828-5291



www.vapoison.org

Poison Hotline 1-800-222-1222

Individuals and groups are welcome to request emergency telephone stickers or magnets, brochures and fact sheets by calling (804) 828-4780 during business hours.

A community service of Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center and the Virginia Department of Health.



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information

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