



poison prevention press

Who Pays for the MPC?

Funding for the Maryland Poison Center comes from federal and state sources as well as grants and contracts. Federal funding has decreased by 20% in the last year with additional cuts expected. State funding is not a line item in the Maryland budget; it is part of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy operating budget. When budget cuts are applied to higher education, they eventually lead to a reduction in the Maryland Poison Center operating budget.

Did you know that...

The Maryland Poison Center has helped nearly 2 million people since it opened in 1972?

Just over 8,000 calls were answered the first year the MPC was open while we answered over 63,000 in 2011?

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40 Years of Excellence!

The Maryland Poison Center, a service of the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, opened its doors in 1972. Over the past 40 years, just under 2 million Marylanders have been helped by the pharmacists and nurses who staff the emergency telephone lines! Many people remember calling the center when their children were young and got into a cleaner or a medicine. This is not surprising, as approximately 50% of calls to the Maryland Poison Center involve a child under the age of 6. But that also means that 50% of calls into the center are about tweens, teens, young adults, adults or seniors. The services of the poison center are vital for all ages.



A quick call to the Maryland Poison Center is faster and less expensive than going to the emergency room. More than 70% of all cases reported to the center are managed safely at home, saving valuable health care resources. Studies estimate that every dollar spent on poison center services saves at least \$7 in health care costs...not to mention making sure first responders and hospital staff can be used for true medical emergencies. In addition to providing service to the public, the poison center is a partner in the health care team, providing consultation to first responders, nurses and physicians.

The Maryland Poison Center has provided assistance in numerous events over the years:

- Gasoline siphoning in 1979 when long lines at gas pumps forced some to siphon gas from car-to-car
- Cyanide contamination of Tylenol in 1982
- Train fire in the tunnel under Baltimore in 2001
- Anthrax attacks in 2001
- Carbon monoxide exposures during the blizzards of 2009/2010
- Mercury in skin lightening creams in 2011

Calls to the Maryland Poison Center are free and confidential. The poison specialist will ask questions about the situation to get a picture of what is happening on site. They will then use their knowledge, resources and consultants if needed, to assess the situation and make recommendations to treat the patient. If the patient requires treatment in the hospital, the specialist will call ahead and make recommendations. Patients are followed by the poison center in the hospital until they are discharged. All calls are entered into a data collection system as the call is taken. This enables the poison center to analyze the calls in real-time for trends and events that might be of public health significance (e.g. terrorism, food poisoning, product recalls).

To celebrate our anniversary, the Maryland Poison Center has updated our look and educational materials. We are also updating our website, with a March roll-out planned. You can follow us on Facebook and sign up for e-newsletters and order educational materials on our website (www.mdpoison.com).

How can you help celebrate our anniversary? Program the poison center telephone number, 1-800-222-1222, in your mobile phone and spread the word to friends and family to do the same. This one phone number can give you piece of mind, no matter how old you are.