

# poison prevention press

## Who Pays for the MPC?

The Maryland Poison Center is primarily supported through state higher education dollars as well as federal grants and private contracts. Federal funding for poison centers has decreased by nearly 33% over the past three years. Poison center funding is not a line item in the Maryland state 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...

- Doctors, nurses and paramedics call the MPC for advice on treating poisonings and overdoses?
- After the initial call, the MPC continues to follow patient progress and offer advice at home and in the hospital?

*Post and share this edition of Poison Prevention Press with your colleagues, friends and family. Read past issues of Poison Prevention Press and subscribe to the newsletter at [www.mdpoison.com](http://www.mdpoison.com)*



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## Don't Google...Just Call!

We have become a technology-based society. If we want to go someplace, we use a GPS device instead of finding a map. Our music is played on devices that fit in the palm of your hand. If we need to look up a definition of a word, we reach for the computer or tablet or smart phone and use dictionary.com instead of reaching for the dictionary. If we have a question about anything, our first thought is to "Google It".

And there is a definite place for this technology. Usually, when you use search engines to find something on the internet, it takes some time to find the exact information you are looking for. You get many choices that satisfy your search. You have to sort through the choices to find the exact answer you are looking for from a source you can trust. How many key strokes do you think it takes to find an answer to your question? Do you think you can get immediate, accurate information with 10 key strokes?

Calling the poison center when someone has used a medicine or household product in the wrong way or in the wrong amount will get you accurate information in seconds with just 10 keystrokes—800-222-1222. Once you dial this number, you are connected right away to a poison expert—a pharmacist or nurse with special training—who will give you the information you need to help the person. You will be given information specific to your situation. The information found on the internet is general and applies to some situations but maybe not yours. Some people call the poison center after they tried to find the answers on the internet. The information they find is scary or confusing. Sometimes it is not correct. Some of the information is outdated. Some of the information might come from blog posts from random people who have little or no knowledge of the topic.

The best advice to follow if you think a poisoning or overdose has happened—Don't Google...Just Call!

## Poison Prevention Week: March 17-23, 2013

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy designated the third week in March as National Poison Prevention Week in order to raise awareness of the dangers of unintentional poisonings. After all these years, is Poison Prevention Week still needed? Most definitely! According to the CDC, poisonings were the second leading cause of death caused by injury in 2009. Further, nearly 9 out of 10 poisoning deaths are caused by drugs.

Follow these basic steps to help promote poison safety:

- Post the poison center phone number (800-222-1222) in a visible location and /or program it in to home phones and mobile phones.
- Follow directions on medicine exactly.
- Read household product labels every time the product is used and follow directions and safety warnings.
- Store all household products in their original containers and never in food containers.
- Have a carbon monoxide alarm in your home if you have a fireplace, wood burning stove, and/or gas appliances (furnace, hot water heater, stove, dryer, etc.)

Share this poison safety information with your friends and relatives. Go to our website, [www.mdpoison.com](http://www.mdpoison.com) or call 410-706-8122 to order educational materials, stickers and magnets for your home or organization.