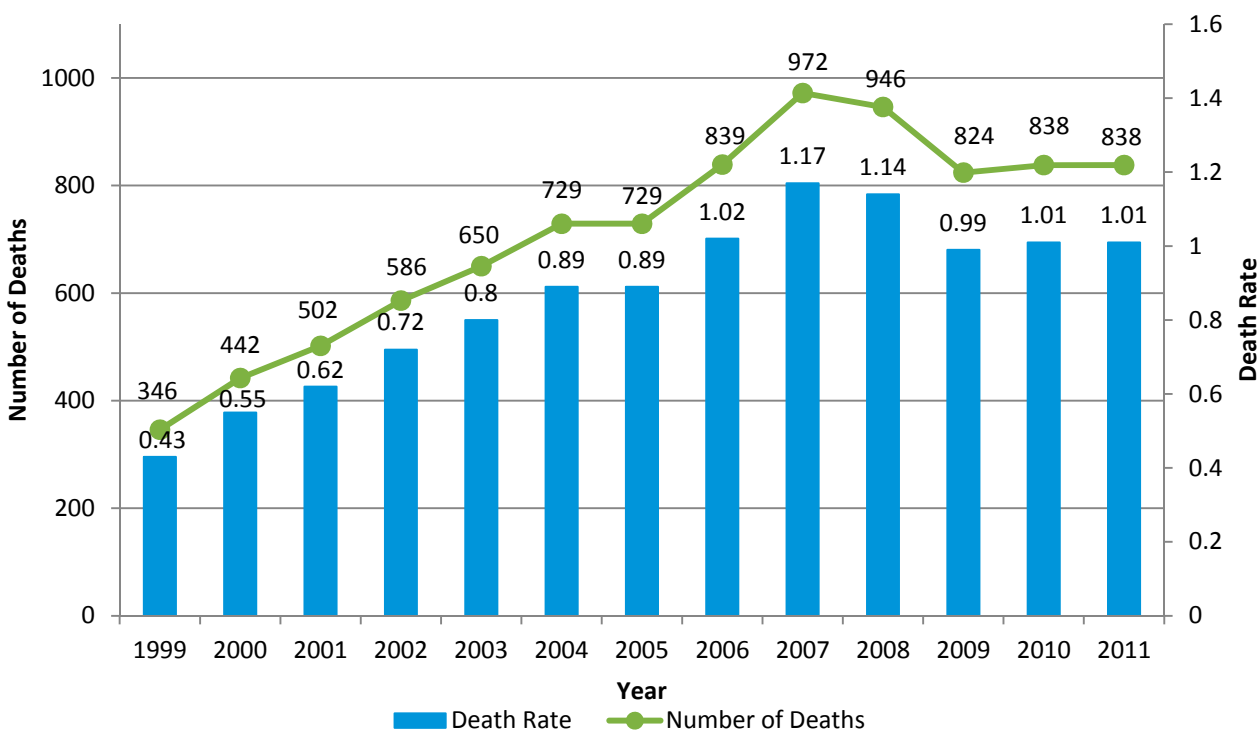


**Poisoning Safety Fact Sheet (2014)**

**Fatalities**

- 838 children ages 19 and under died from poisonings in 2011.<sup>1</sup> 746 of these deaths, or 89%, were drug-related.<sup>1</sup>
  - 88% of children (739) who died from a poisoning were ages 15 to 19.<sup>1</sup>
  - 73% of children (611) who died from a poisoning were boys.<sup>1</sup>
- The number of children dying from poisoning has more than doubled since 1999.<sup>1</sup>

**1999-2011 Poisoning\* Fatalities and Death Rate Among Children Ages 19 and Under**



*Death Rate per 100,000 Children  
\*Includes medication-related and CO deaths.*

**Injuries**

- 125,519 children ages 19 and under were seen in emergency rooms for nonfatal poisonings in 2012.<sup>1</sup>

**Additional Statistics**

**Medication:**

- In 2011, 67,700 children ages 4 and under were seen in emergency departments for accidental medication exposures, and 12,390 of these children required hospitalization.<sup>2</sup>



- Children ages 13 to 24 months are most frequently seen in emergency departments after getting into a medication, accounting for 68% of medication-related visits for young children.<sup>2</sup>
- In emergency department cases where information is known, 38% involved a grandparent's medicine, 31% the mother's medicine, 12% a sibling's medicine, 8% the father's medicine, 5% a aunt/uncle's medicine, and 6% known/other.<sup>2</sup>
- In emergency department cases where information is known, the pill was found on the ground or misplaced (27%), in a purse or bag (20%), on a counter or nightstand (20%), in a pillbox or bag of pills (15%). In only 6% of cases, the medicine was in a cabinet or drawer.<sup>2</sup>
- Timing of dose leads to the greatest number of dosing errors in children ages 5 and under (31% of dosing errors), followed by measurement errors (30%).<sup>2</sup>
- For every 10 poison exposures in children, approximately nine occur in the home.<sup>3 4</sup>

#### Other poisons:

- The leading causes of non-medication exposure calls to poison control centers for children ages 5 and under were cosmetics and personal care products, household cleaning substances, foreign bodies/toys, pesticides and plants.<sup>5</sup>
- Some of the most serious household poisons other than medicine include drain openers and toilet bowl cleaners which can cause chemical burns as serious as burns from fire; nail glue removers that can cause cyanide poisoning if swallowed; and windshield washer solution that can cause blindness and death if swallowed.<sup>6</sup>

#### Poison control centers:

- Half of the 2 million calls to poison control centers in 2011 were for exposures and ingestions among children ages 5 and under.<sup>5</sup>
- Each dollar spent on a poison control center saves approximately \$7 to \$15 in unnecessary health care expenses.<sup>7 8</sup>
- The national toll-free 24-hour hotline is: **1-800-222-1222**. This hotline connects the public to their local poison control center, staffed by medical professionals in poisoning management.

#### Carbon monoxide:

- In 2009, poison control centers reported 3,551 cases of CO exposure among children ages 19 and under.<sup>9</sup>
- Because of their high metabolic rates and high tissue oxygen demands, children are biologically at increased risk of CO poisoning when exposed to CO.<sup>10</sup>

## References

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<sup>2</sup> Ferguson RW, Mickalide AD. An In-Depth Look at Keeping Young Children Safe Around Medicine. Washington, DC: Safe Kids Worldwide, March 2013.

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<sup>5</sup> Bronstein AC et al. 2011 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System (NPDS): 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Report. Clin Toxicol (Phila). 2012; 50(10): 911-1164.



<sup>6</sup> National Capital Poison Center. The Most Dangerous Poisons for Children. Available from: <http://www.poison.org/prevent/dangerous.asp>. Accessed April 9, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> American Association of Poison Control Centers. Frequently asked questions. American Association of Poison Control Centers Website. Available from: <http://www.aapcc.org/dnn/PoisoningPrevention/FAQ.aspx>. Accessed October 10, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Spiller HA, Griffith JRK. The value and evolving role of the U.S. poison control center system. *Public Health Reports*. May-June 2009; 124: 359-363.

<sup>9</sup> Bronstein AC, Spyker DA, Cantilena LR, et al. 2010 Annual report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' national poison data system (NPDS): 28<sup>th</sup> annual report. Alexandria, VA: American Association of Poison Control Centers, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Iqbal S, Law HZ, Clower JH, Yip FY, Elixhauser A. Hospital burden of unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning in the United States, 2007. *Am J Emerg Med*. 2011: in press.

Last updated June 2014. If you have a question about this factsheet, please call 202-662-0600.

