



Surveillance Report

POISON
Help
1-800-222-1222

A graphic for the Poison Help logo. It features a red pill bottle with a white skull and crossbones on its side. The word "Help" is written in a large, bold, black sans-serif font, with the pill bottle acting as the letter "e".

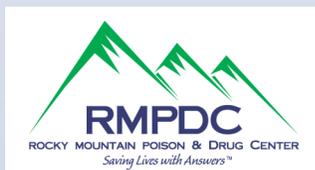
Montana Poison Center Program

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has partnered with the Rocky Mountain Poison Center in Denver, Colorado since 1983 to provide life saving medical advice and poison information to Montanan citizens and healthcare providers. Trained professionals (nurses, pharmacists, and doctors specializing in toxicology) provide poison advice that is confidential, free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Why is the Poison Center Important?

Poisonings are the third leading cause of unintentional injury death in Montana.¹ An estimated \$4.1 million in healthcare costs were saved in Montana in 2011 by utilizing the Poison Center to evaluate and manage poisoning cases at the site of exposure rather than in an emergency department or doctor's office.²

- The Poison Center staff provide emergency poison management information that may prevent an unnecessary emergency department or outpatient visit.
- The Poison Center can provide real-time surveillance data to identify and track public health and environmental threats.
- The return on investment (ROI) for every \$1.00 invested in the Poison Center system is \$13.39.²
- 58% of all poison exposures reported to the Poison Center occur in children under the age of 6 years old.³

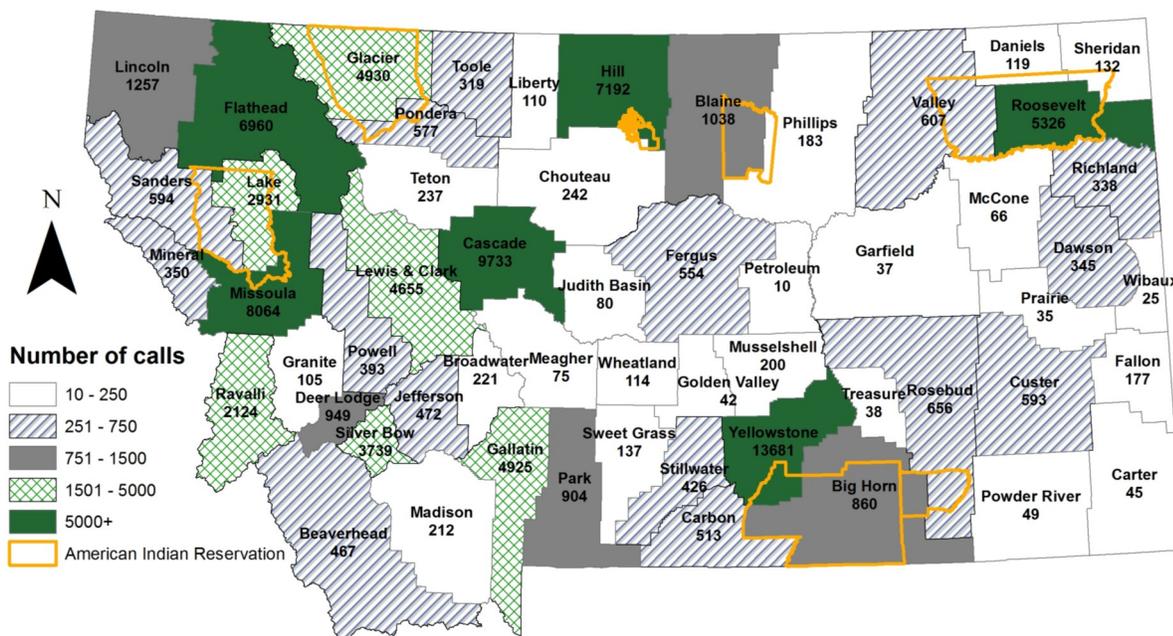


February 2013

Montana Poison Center Exposure Data

Between 2007-2011, over 100,000 calls were made to the Poison Center and calls came from every county in Montana (Figure 1). Of the calls to the Poison Center for a poison exposure, 58% were for children aged less than 6 years. The leading cause of Poison Center calls for children and adults was ingestion or exposure to pain medication (Table).

Figure 1: Calls to the Montana Poison Center by County, 2007-2011



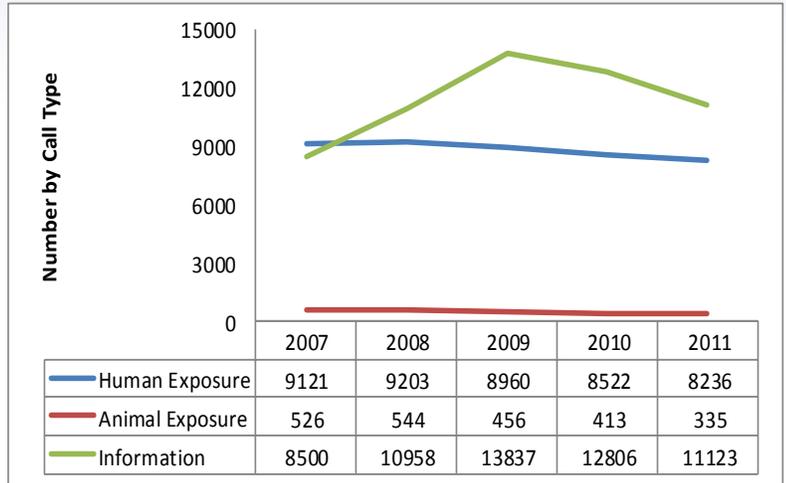
Some household cleaners are packaged in bottles very similar to those of popular beverages.

Table: Top Five Most Common Poison Exposures by Age, Montana, 2007-2011

Poison Exposure	Number of Calls: Ages 0-5	Poison Exposure	Number of Calls: Ages 6+
1. Pain Medication	3034	1. Pain Medication	2945
2. Cosmetics/Personal Care Products	2909	2. Sedatives	2239
3. Household Cleaning Products	2340	3. Antidepressants	1808
4. Topical Preparations	1647	4. Alcohol	1497
5. Foreign Bodies	1509	5. Cardiovascular Medications	901

Figure 2: Montana Poison Center Calls by Type, 2007-2011

Approximately half of all calls made to the Poison Center are informational: the caller is seeking information about a medication, to learn about environmental or medical effects of a poison or pesticide, or to receive poison control stickers and pamphlets or other public education materials (Figure 2).



The Poison Center saves Montana money by allowing callers to manage the majority of poison exposure calls on site, ultimately saving the cost of an emergency department or outpatient visit. Between 2007-2011, 74% of calls were managed on site and 26% were referred for medical evaluation. **In one year, over \$4 million in healthcare costs are saved by having the Montana Poison Center**, largely through preventing unnecessary visits to the emergency department, doctor’s office, or in lost productivity.²

The Lewin Report,² released in September 2012, described an ROI of \$13 for every \$1 invested in the poison center system. Additionally, the report estimated that poison centers saved \$5.77 per US resident in health care dollars with a cost of \$0.43 per resident to fund the Montana Poison Center. Additionally, hospitalizations are reduced an average of 3.2 days when health care providers receive poison center consultation.

Montana Poison Center Helps Montanans

Below are testimonials from two individuals who called the Montana Poison Center in 2012.

“My one-year old son was playing with a glow stick that opened and got liquid into his eyes and mouth. He was crying and my wife was worried he was poisoned by the liquid. She needed me to leave work to drive him and her to the emergency room in Billings, which is a 45 minute trip from our house. Instead, we called the Poison Center and the nurse reassured us that we could irrigate his eyes and the worst he would get from ingesting the liquid was a belly ache. We didn’t need to go to the emergency room and I didn’t miss work. The Poison Center helped me and I’m glad it was there.” - Steven



“My younger brother has seizures and takes medication to manage his seizures. My toddler got into my brother’s medications and swallowed one of the seizure medications. I called the poison control number and they helped me manage this without having to go to my doctor or the hospital. I want the program to help other people like it helped me.” - Tiffany

References:

- 1 CDC Wisqars Fatal Causes of Death, Montana 2007
- 2 Lewin Report, September 2012, accessed at https://aapcc.s3.amazonaws.com/files/library/Value_of_the_Poison_Center_System_FINAL_9.pdf
- 3 Montana Poison Center Data, Montana, 2007—2011



Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

BUREAU

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For more information contact:

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(406) 444-4126

[http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/ems/poison/
index.shtml](http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/ems/poison/index.shtml)

Poison Prevention Recommendations

- Keep the Poison Control Number **1-800-222-1222** on all telephones and as a contact on your cell phone
- Poison control stickers, magnets and action cards are available for free by contacting:

MT Injury Prevention Program
406-444-4126
bperkins@mt.gov

Report Highlights:

Cost Savings:

- For every \$1 spent on the Poison Center, \$13 is saved in healthcare costs and lost productivity
- An estimated \$4.1 million in healthcare costs were saved in Montana in 2011 by utilizing the Poison Center to manage poison exposures on site instead of in the emergency department

Poison Center Helps Many:

- Over 100,000 Montanans called the Poison Center in the last five years