



CAROLINAS  
POISON CENTER

BIENNIAL REPORT  
2012 | 2013



# GET TO KNOW US

**Who we are:** Carolinas Poison Center  
(also known as “Poison Control”)

**How you can reach us:** 1-800-222-1222 anytime day or night

**What we do:** Provide treatment advice over the phone  
for poisonings or suspected poisonings

**Who we serve:** Anyone in North Carolina

**Who answers the phones:** Nurses and pharmacists with specialized  
training in handling poisonings


**How much we save:** Over 11 million dollars in medical costs



## WHY CALL US?

# 5 REASONS to call **Carolinas Poison Center**

- 1. You'll receive care from experts.** Our healthcare providers are Specialists in Poison Information. We have special knowledge about how substances act in the body, which toxins are more concerning than others, and what to do if something shouldn't have been tasted, touched or breathed. Board-certified medical toxicologists back up the specialists.
- 2. It may save a trip to the emergency department or urgent care.** Nearly 75 percent of our calls are handled at home or at the call site.
- 3. We can provide immediate help.** Sometimes people call in a panic. We can accurately and quickly address your concern and let you know if the issue will require the next level of care.
- 4. Calls are free and confidential.** Often callers are concerned that their calls will be "reported" to a social service agency. Well-meaning callers never need to worry! We keep your information private the same way your doctor's office does.
- 5. We don't judge.** We know accidents happen. We're here to help. Each year our staff is ranked exceptionally by our callers who say the specialists at the poison center really listened to their concern. If you've ever had to call, you've likely experienced the care and compassion firsthand.



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*Anything can be a poison  
if it's used in the wrong  
way, wrong amount or by  
the wrong person.*

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1-800-222-1222

# By the Numbers

CAROLINAS POISON CENTER

2012-2013



**186,108**

CALLS ANSWERED by  
Carolinas Poison Center

Almost **5,000**  
poison center calls from  
**GRANDPARENTS**



Nearly **6 out of every 10** calls involved a pharmaceutical substance like a pain reliever, antidepressant, or cough and cold medicine.



non-pharmaceutical  
substance people  
call about:  
**cosmetics/personal  
care products**

**20%** of calls came from  
a doctor, nurse  
or pharmacist

**49%** of  
all  
calls concerned  
a **CHILD UNDER  
6 YEARS OLD**



3 out of every 4 calls is  
managed at **HOME**

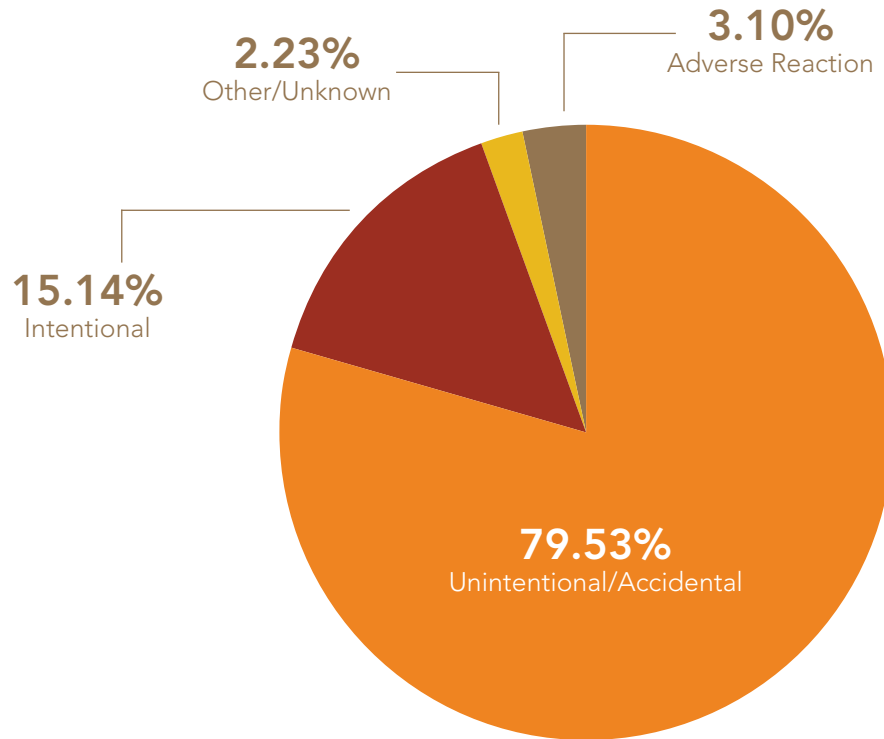


**2/3** of callers said they would have sought other  
medical care, incurring added expenses, if  
Carolinas Poison Center was not there to help.

**\$ 11 million+**: Money saved  
by averting unnecessary visits to  
urgent care centers, emergency  
rooms, visits to doctors or 911.

# HOW WAS THE PERSON POISONED?

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*Carolinas Poison Center  
helps people of all ages  
from young children to  
senior adults.*

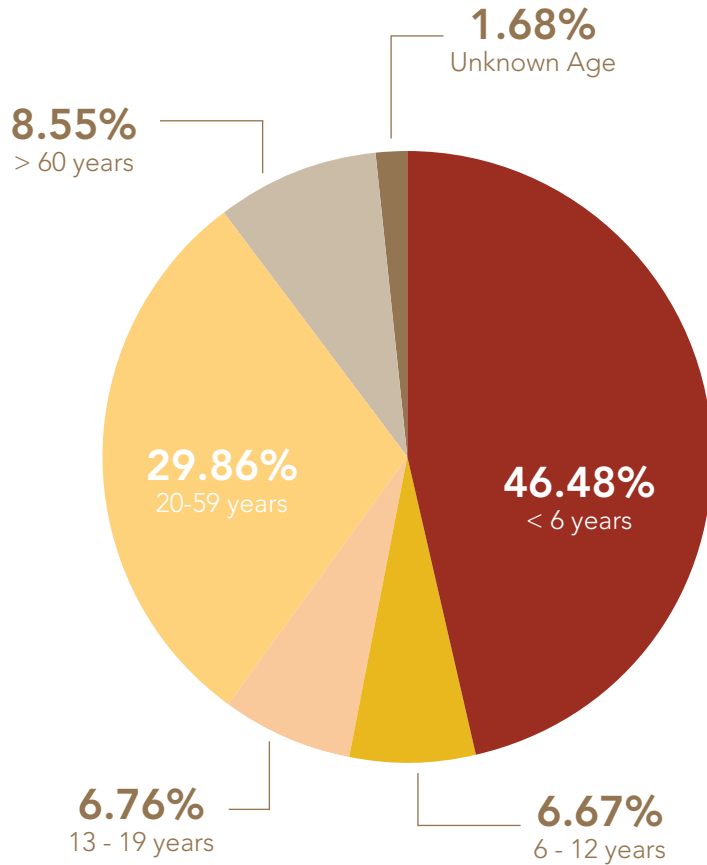
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WHAT WAS THE  
**AGE** OF THE  
PERSON  
**EXPOSED**  
TO THE POISON?

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## HELPING Healthcare Providers



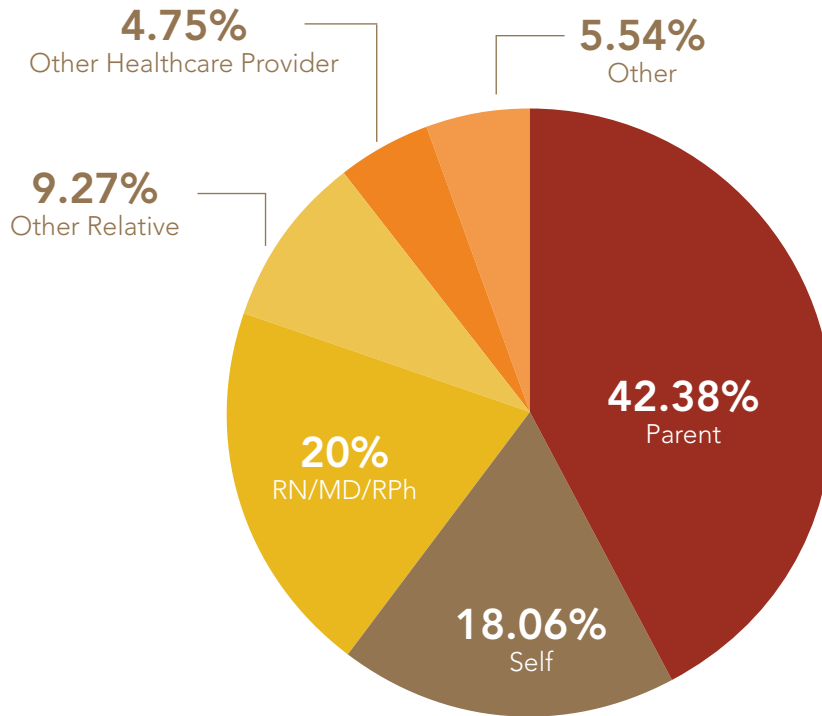
Did you know that **20%** of our call volume comes from other healthcare providers? **IT'S TRUE!**

Nurses, pharmacists and doctors rely on Carolinas Poison Center to answer questions and provide treatment advice about things like overdoses, new kinds of drug abuse or bites from venomous creatures. That's because the people who answer the phones are nurses and pharmacists who are specially trained to field questions about poisonings. Board-certified toxicologists are available to answer more complicated questions when needed.

If your doctor or nurse trusts Carolinas Poison Center for poisoning advice, **SHOULDN'T YOU?**

## WHO PLACED THE CALL?

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# Types OF CALLS



Ever wondered whether  
or not two medicines  
you're taking will cause  
unwanted side effects?  
**WE CAN HELP.**

Here are a few examples of calls we receive:

- A child who's given an extra dose of medicine by a parent or caregiver
- Someone who's come in contact with poison ivy on a camping trip
- A healthcare provider with questions about a patient who has taken synthetic drugs
- A toddler who has swallowed a pill that was found on the floor
- A doctor who is treating a patient for a snakebite
- A senior adult who has accidentally taken the wrong diabetes medicine

The Carolinas Poison Center takes over **250 calls every day**. The nurses, pharmacists, and doctors who handle the calls at the center are just a phone call away. Most calls can be handled at the site of the call, saving you the cost of seeking additional care.



## SPOTLIGHT ON POISONS: Laundry Pods



In 2012, Carolinas Poison Center identified a new trend when we received reports of young children who had been harmed after being exposed to laundry detergent pods. If the product ended up in a young child's hands, the pods could burst in the mouth, on the skin, or near the eye and could cause serious medical complications. Symptoms included excessive vomiting, extreme tiredness or even trouble breathing.

In 2012 and 2013, Carolinas Poison Center took 482 calls about laundry detergent pods. As a result of the increase in calls to poison centers nationwide about these products, some manufacturers began reevaluating the way that laundry pods were packaged. In 2013 additional safety packaging was added to some product containers. Carolinas Poison Center continues to monitor and provide treatment advice for laundry detergent pod exposures across the state.

1-800-222-1222





## SPOTLIGHT ON POISONS: Rx Drugs



Exposures to both over-the-counter and prescription drugs are a primary reason people call the poison center. One out of every five calls concerns some kind of pain reliever. Calls to the poison center in North Carolina are reflective of the growing use of prescription pain medicine use nationwide.

Furthermore, opioid analgesic pain reliever use has increased over 300 percent in a decade's time. Opioid analgesics provide pain relief by working with the central nervous system to block the feeling of pain. Some common opioid analgesics include hydrocodone, oxycodone and methadone. The death rates for poisoning related to opioid analgesics more than tripled from 2000 to 2010 according to the CDC.

Carolin's Poison Center can help callers who have questions about taking their medicines safely. We can also provide medical advice in the event medicine has been taken incorrectly or by the wrong person.

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*1 out of every 5 calls  
concerns some kind of  
pain reliever.*

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# SHARING PILLS CAN KILL CAMPAIGN

*1 in 4 high school seniors had taken a prescription medicine not intended for them.*

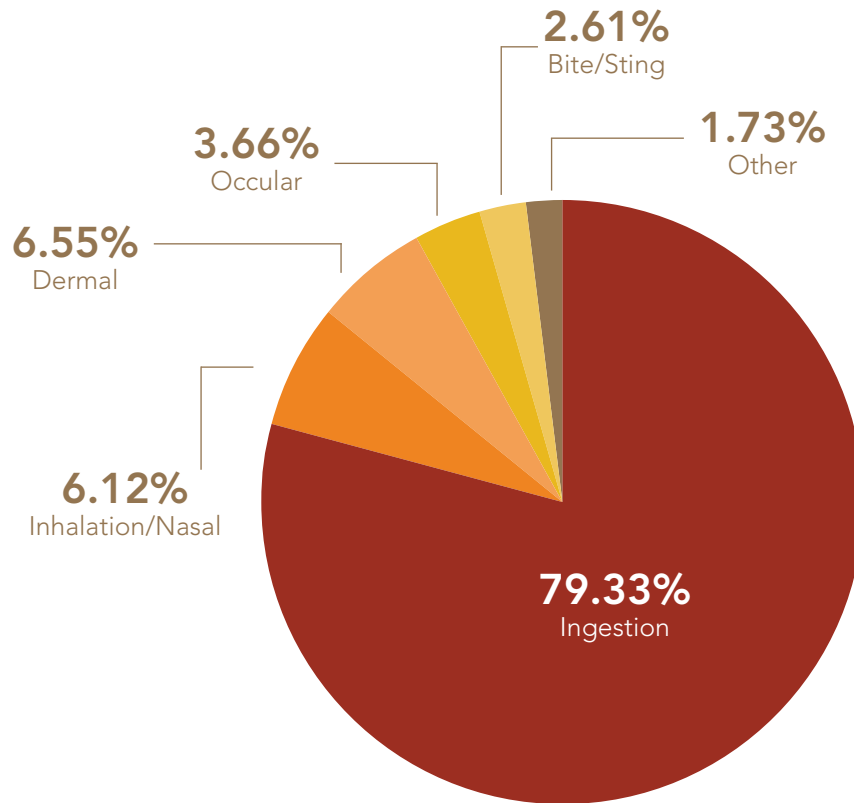
In 2012, after monitoring trends in prescription drug misuse and abuse, the Carolinas Poison Center began an education campaign targeting teens. Through market research, the poison center discovered that middle and high school students did not often understand that sharing their medicines could be harmful. We also learned that one in four high school seniors had taken a prescription medicine not intended for them. The poison center laid the groundwork to launch the “Sharing Pills Can Kill” campaign. The message aimed to help teens think about only taking medicines as prescribed.

The campaign has been used in local school districts, injury prevention coalitions, addiction facilities, pediatric clinics, behavioral health facilities and other agencies serving adolescents and their families. To date, the Sharing Pills Can Kill Public Service Announcement has had over 700,000 impressions and has been promoted across the state in both print and online venues.

You can view the Sharing Pills Can Kill PSA by visiting the Carolinas Poison Center’s YouTube channel.



1-800-222-1222



## ROUTE OF EXPOSURE

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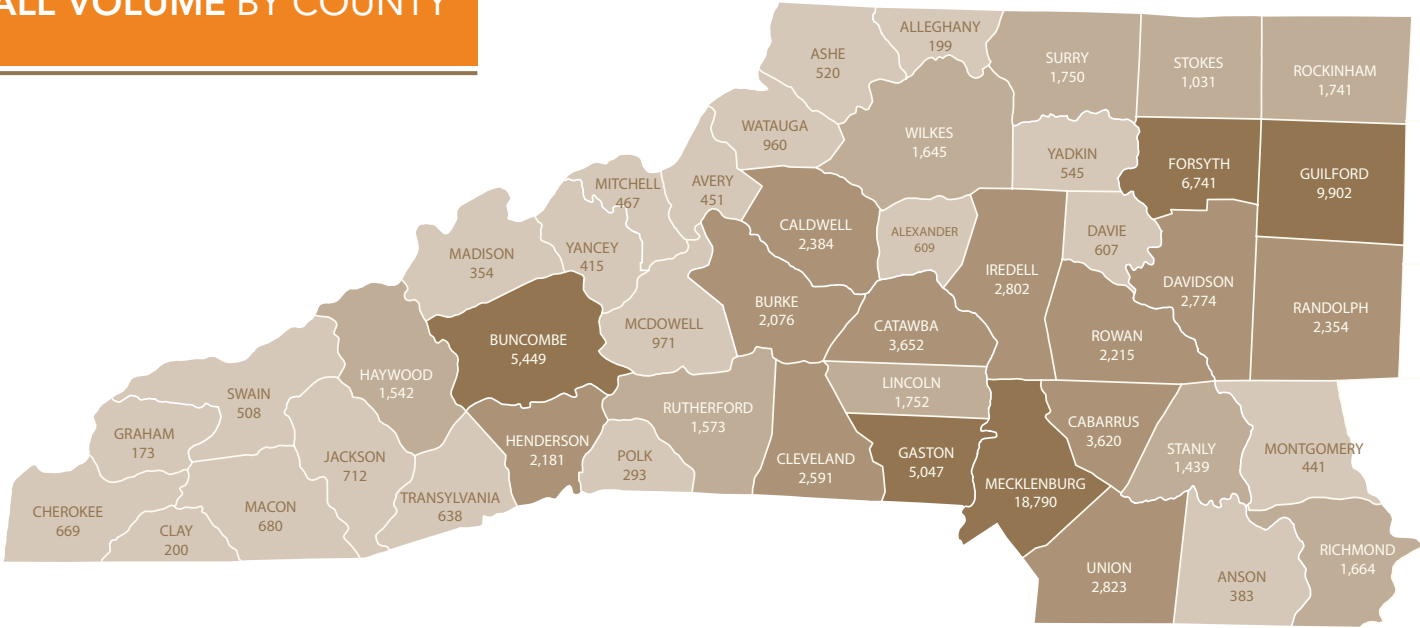


# 5 TIPS that can help keep **POTENTIAL POISONS** OUT OF CHILDREN'S HANDS:

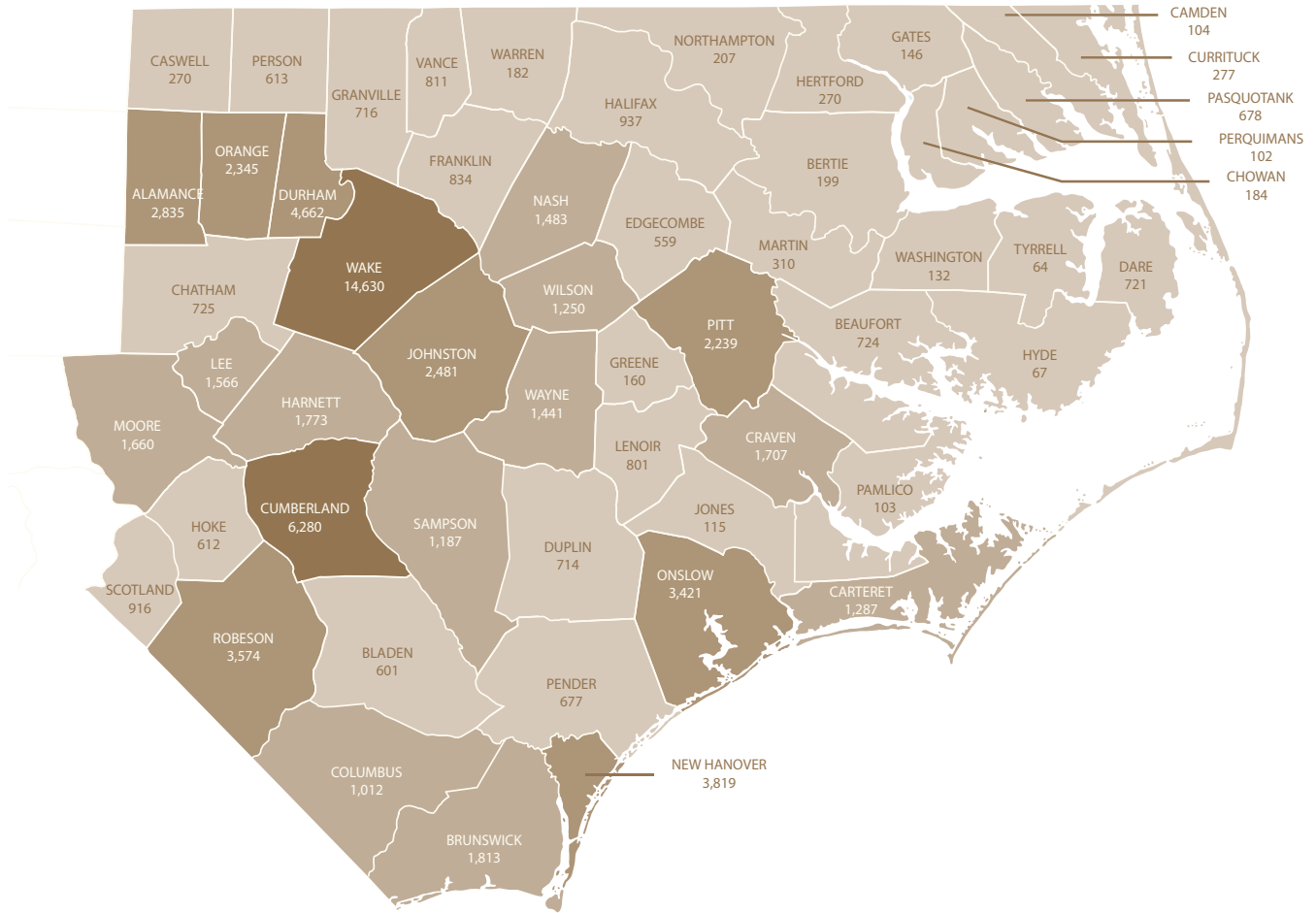
- 1) Keep household cleaners and medicines up and away and locked if possible.
- 2) Don't call medicine "candy."
- 3) Talk to children about the safe use of household products and medicines.
- 4) Store all products in their original containers.
- 5) Take the product or medicine with you to answer the door or the phone.



# CALL VOLUME BY COUNTY



- 0 - 1,000 calls
  - 1,001 - 2,000 calls
  - 2,001 - 5,000 calls
  - 5,001 - 25,000 calls
- 875 calls from an unknown county



1-800-222-1222

## Monitoring Poisonings **ACROSS THE STATE**

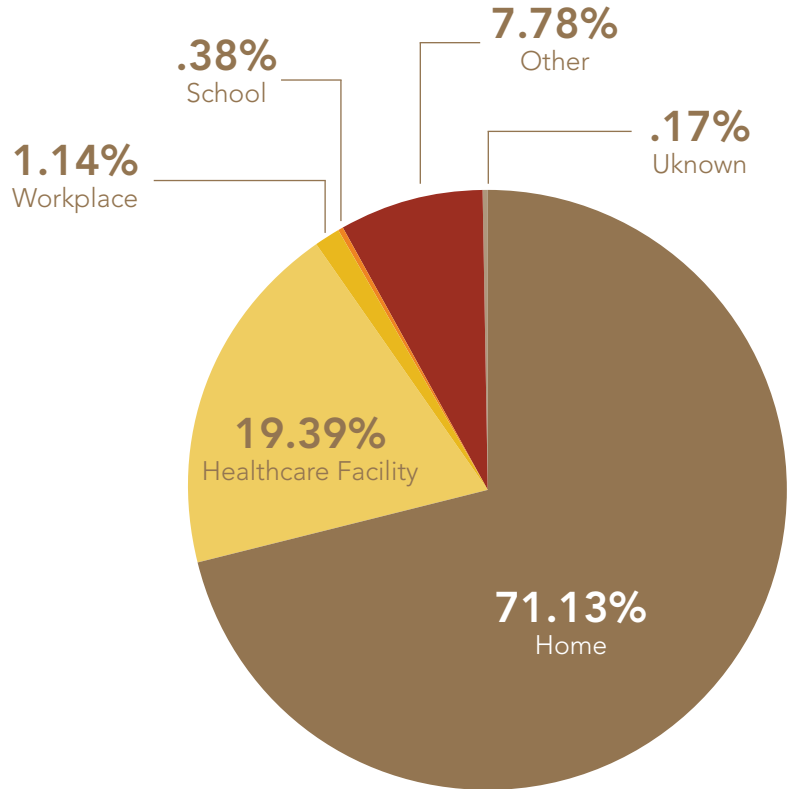
A faint, light-colored map of North Carolina is positioned in the upper right corner of the slide, partially overlapping the title text.

Because we take calls from all 100 counties in North Carolina, the poison center can easily track trends and outbreaks. We can alert public health officials and first responders to outbreaks concerning things like food borne illnesses and chemical or biological agents.

We upload data in real-time to the North Carolina Disease Event Tracking and Epidemic Collection Tool (NCDETECT) to provide state epidemiologists a comprehensive picture of poisonings throughout North Carolina. We also upload data to the National Poison Data System (NPDS), a database that collects poison center data from around the country to aid in nationwide surveillance.

## CALLER SITE

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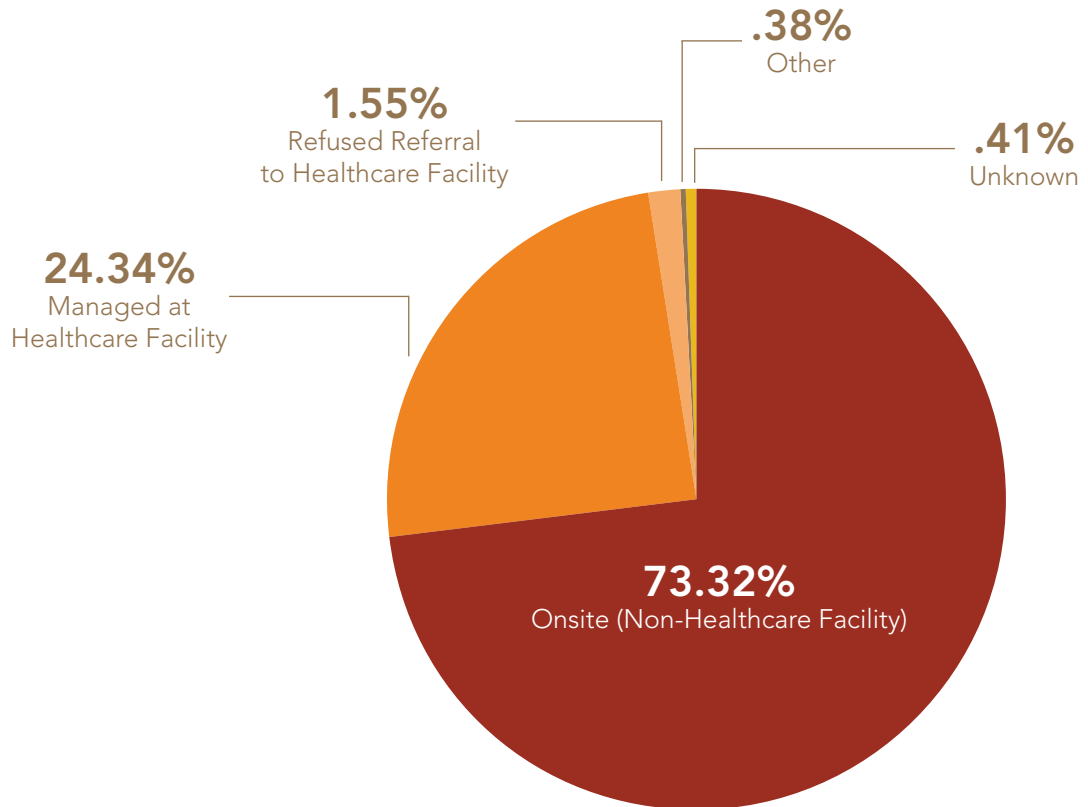


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*Find pictures of common  
poisonous indoor and  
outdoor plants at  
[NCPoisonCenter.org](https://www.ncpoisoncenter.org).*

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# WHERE WERE THE POISONINGS MANAGED?



# 5 TOP FIVE SUBSTANCES RESULTING IN POISONINGS

## PHARMACEUTICALS

Analgesics (pain relievers)  
Sedatives/hypnotics/antipsychotics  
Cardiovascular drugs  
Antidepressants  
Antihistamines

## NON-PHARMACEUTICALS

Cosmetics/personal care products  
Cleaning substances  
Foreign bodies/toys/miscellaneous  
Pesticides  
Alcohols





## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Not only is the poison center here to help in a poisoning emergency, but we're here to help prevent poisonings, too. The public education program at Carolinas Poison Center seeks to give people information they can use to avoid a poisoning and live a healthier life.

In 2012-2013, Carolinas Poison Center distributed over half a million education items to North Carolinians, and in 2013 alone, we received over 700 orders through our online store [www.PoisonShop.org](http://www.PoisonShop.org). Anyone in North Carolina can order a free poison prevention pack through the store or by calling Carolinas Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

[WWW.POISONSHOP.ORG](http://WWW.POISONSHOP.ORG)

1-800-222-1222



SHARING PILLS CAN KILL, BUT  
**AWARENESS SAVES LIVES.**

POISON  
**Help**  
1-800-222-1222

Call your Poison Center  
for medication help.

[SHARINGPILLSCANKILL.COM](http://SHARINGPILLSCANKILL.COM)





**CAROLINAS POISON CENTER**  
serving all of North Carolina

[www.NCPoisonCenter.org](http://www.NCPoisonCenter.org)

**1-800-222-1222**



Carolinan HealthCare System