



# Carolinas Poison Center

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Biennial Report

2008-2009

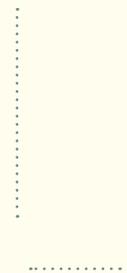
# Carolinas Poison Center

## Biennial Report

2008-2009

We Are

A free, 24/7, confidential phone help line assisting people who have come in contact with a poison or who have questions about poisons. **What is a poison?** It can be ANYTHING if it is used in the wrong *way*, wrong *amount* or by the wrong *person*. Drugs, chemicals and gases are types of poisons. Bites and stings can be poisonous, too.



*free*

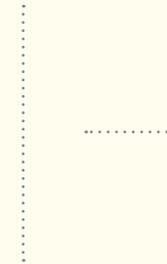
We Are

Nurses and pharmacists - specialists who answer your calls. Toxicologists are ready for back up if needed. When you call, you are getting the **best help** possible in the quickest amount of time. Our nurses, pharmacists and physicians are specially trained just for your call.

.....  
*experts*

We Are

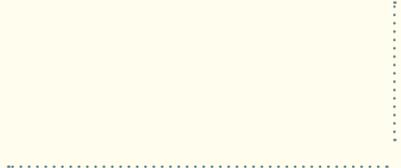
The **only** phone resource available to the state providing expert medical advice about poisonings. Why wait it out in a hospital or urgent care if you don't have to? Why worry about something that could be treated or watched at home?



*fast*

We Are

Dedicated to maintaining and improving your health. Carolinas Poison Center (CPC) is here around the clock to help you or someone you love in case the unthinkable happens. You place yourself in **good, safe hands** with a call to the poison center, where you'll receive specialized advice right away.



*caring*

We Are

Mothers Fathers Grandparents Mentors Sons Daughters Brothers Sisters Friends Co-workers

here for you



# Carolinas Poison Center (CPC)

*by the Numbers* 2008/2009

252,755

number of calls CPC answered

15

percent of exposure calls made to CPC by a doctor or nurse from a healthcare facility about a poisoning exposure

139

healthcare facilities in North Carolina that consulted CPC about poisoned patients

71

percent of people surveyed by CPC who would seek treatment at an Emergency Room (ER), urgent care, doctor's office, or who would call Emergency Medical Services (EMS) if there was no poison center

83

percent of poisonings that were accidental

77,622

number of calls to the CPC from parents because of a suspected or actual exposure to a poison

77

percent of calls managed at home (or at the call site)

9.5

millions of dollars in medical costs CPC is estimated to save in one year by treating patients at home

3

nearly the number of times calls about pain killers exceeded the second most called about category of drugs. CPC received more calls about pain killers than all calls about sedatives, cough and cold medicines, antihistamines and antidepressants

## It's About You

Carolinas Poison Center serves YOU. We are here to serve every resident of North Carolina. If you haven't called the Poison Center, chances are you know someone who has. While most of our calls come from people at home, we also help physicians, nurses and pharmacists who depend on us. Fifteen percent of our calls in 2008 and 2009 were from healthcare professionals who help you. We advised 139 medical facilities statewide.

*“I so appreciate that you are there whenever I need someone.”*

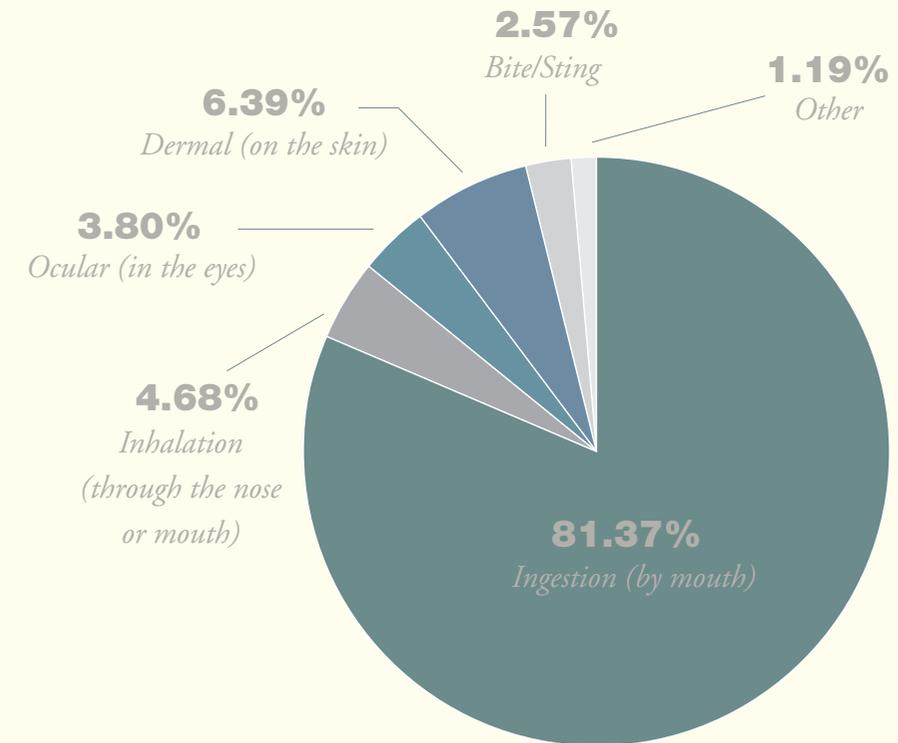


A school nurse called when a high school student took two doses of medicine within a short period of time because it hadn't kicked in right away. The school nurse knew she could count on the Poison Center.

Over-the-counter and prescription medications are one of the main reasons people call us. Avoid a medication poisoning by:

- Always following directions on the package
- Never taking more than the prescribed dose
- Never taking medicine not meant for you

## *How did the person come in contact with the poison?*



Did you know that a poison can be **ANYTHING**, if it is taken by the wrong **PERSON**, in the wrong **AMOUNT** or in the wrong **WAY**?

“*I really appreciate the work the Poison Center does.*”

A dad discovered that his child had swallowed a button battery in a toy cell phone and called the Poison Center immediately. David, nurse specialist at Carolinas Poison Center, comforted the family and told dad what to do. The child's mother called back when the situation was resolved to say how thankful she was for the Poison Center.



## *10 most common substances resulting in poisonings*

### Pharmaceuticals

### # of Cases

Analgesics	61,420
Sedative, Hypnotic & Anti-Psychotics	22,987
Unknown Drug	13,235
Antihistamines	11,686
Antidepressants	11,532
Cardiovascular Drugs	10,873
Antimicrobials	9,686
Cough & Cold Preparations	8,692
Topical Preparations	7,498
Muscle Relaxants	7,228

### Non-Pharmaceuticals

### # of Cases

Cosmetics & Personal Care Products	13,986
Household Cleaning Substances	13,078
Foreign Bodies, Toys & Miscellaneous	8,357
Insecticides & Pesticides (Excluding Rodenticides)	8,307
Alcohols	5,609
Bites & Envenomations	5,175
Plants	4,888
Food Products & Food Poisoning	4,473
Hydrocarbons	3,231
Chemicals	3,140

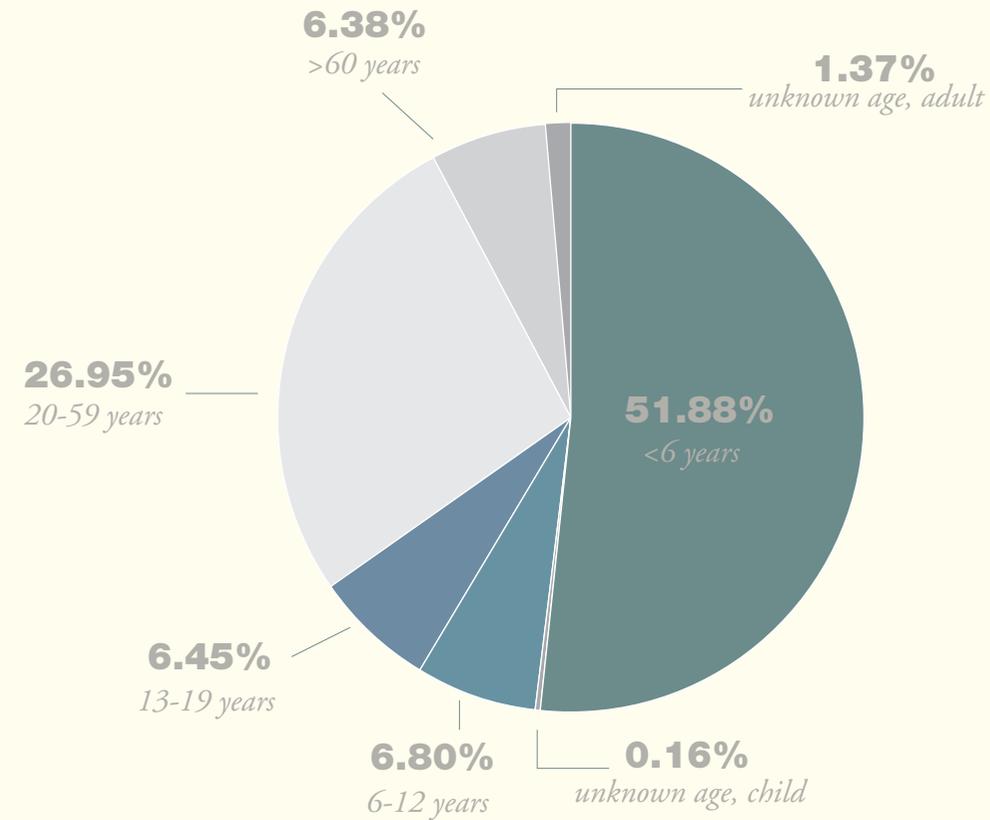
Did you know that more than 50 percent of calls to Carolinas Poison Center involve children under the age of six?

“  
*You calmed me down so much.  
I was really scared, and I happened  
to see your number on the box.  
Thank you so much.*”

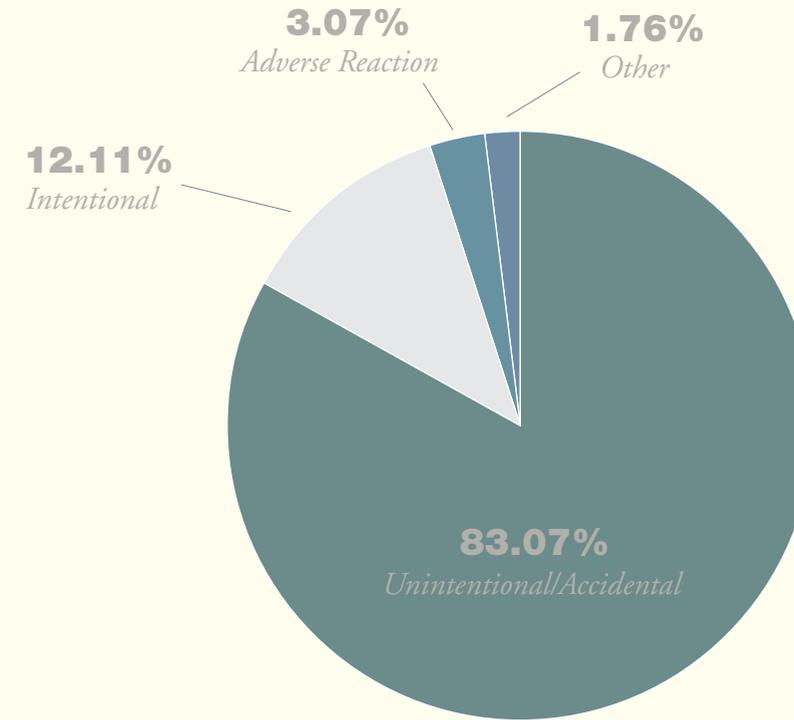
A mother called and got Deb at the Poison Center when her 3-year-old opened a bottle of pain reliever and drank some of the medicine. Deb told the mom what symptoms to look for and saved this family a trip to the hospital.



*What was the age of the person exposed to the poison?*



*How was the person poisoned?*



The Poison Center is not just for parents. Calls from or about senior adults are among the fastest growing type, increasing 30% within the last five years.

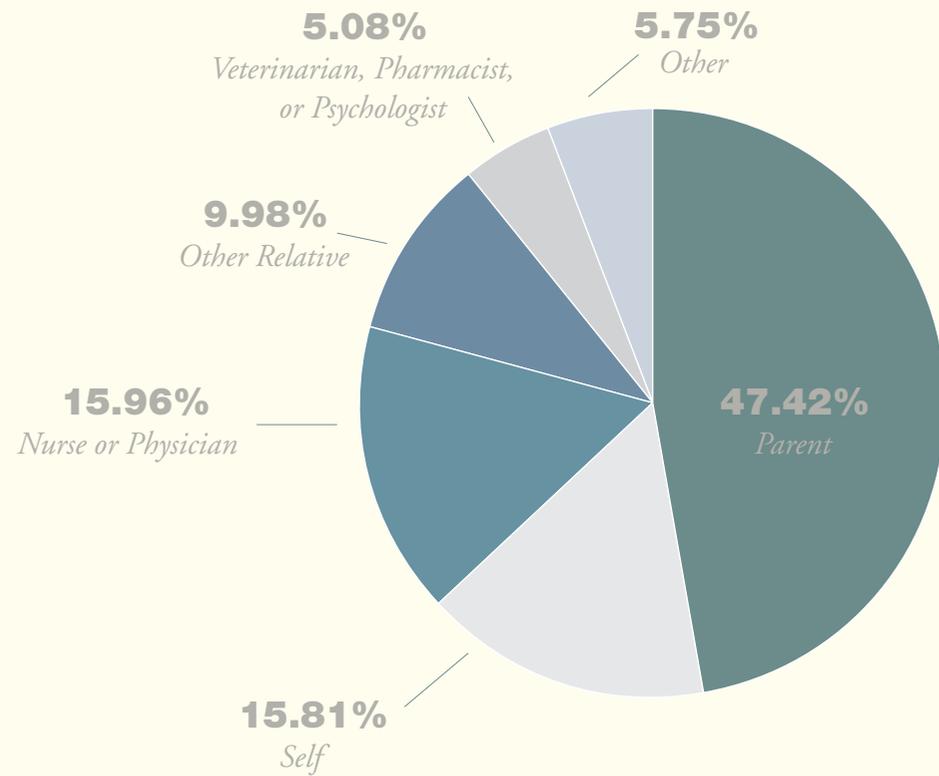
“*I’m feeling good today. Thank you for your help.*”

A senior adult called the center when she grabbed the nail polish remover bottle instead of her water bottle. After swallowing a mouthful, she called the Poison Center. She called back the next day to tell Alison at the Center that she was feeling better.

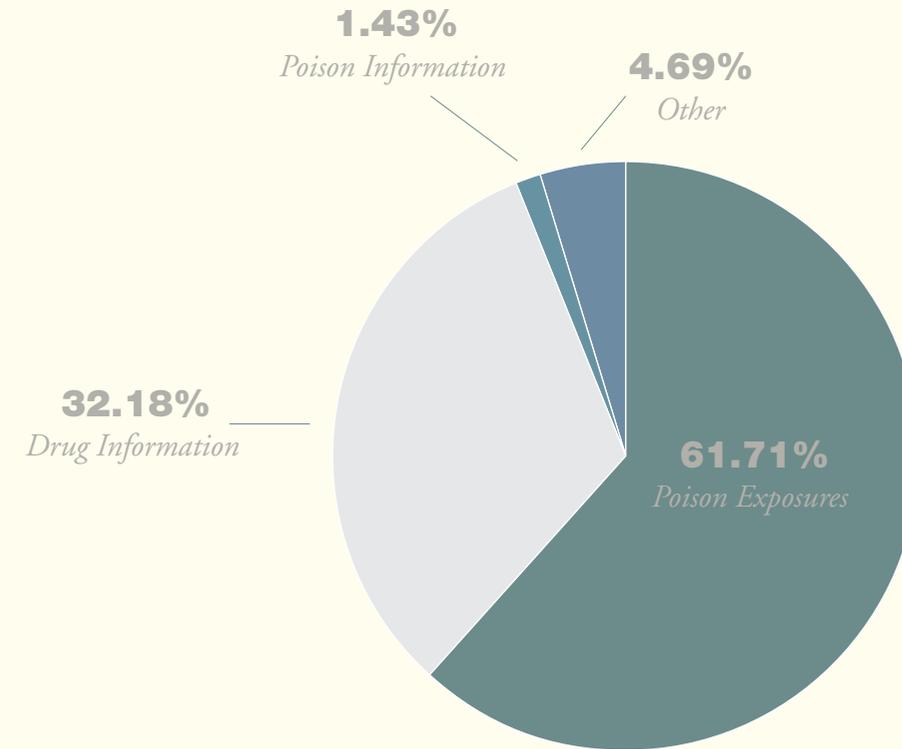


## Who called on behalf of the patient?

(Information calls excluded)



## What were the reasons for the call?



You shouldn't wait for symptoms to appear before calling the Poison Center.  
Symptoms may be delayed.

“*Thank you very much. You've  
been really helpful.*”



A husband called when his wife got some pesticide on her hands and legs as she was spraying a chemical outside. The husband, who is also an Emergency Medical Services worker, thanked the Poison Center nurse specialist for her assistance.



# Making It Easier

In today's super-fast information sharing and networking age, it's important to have a resource that's compatible with the way you live. That's why Carolinas Poison Center launched **www.ncpoisoncenter.org**. We steer users easily through topics like:

- How to reach us
- What to expect when you call
- How to find more information about specific poison-related topics
- How to educate your family and friends about preventing poisonings
- How to order poison prevention materials

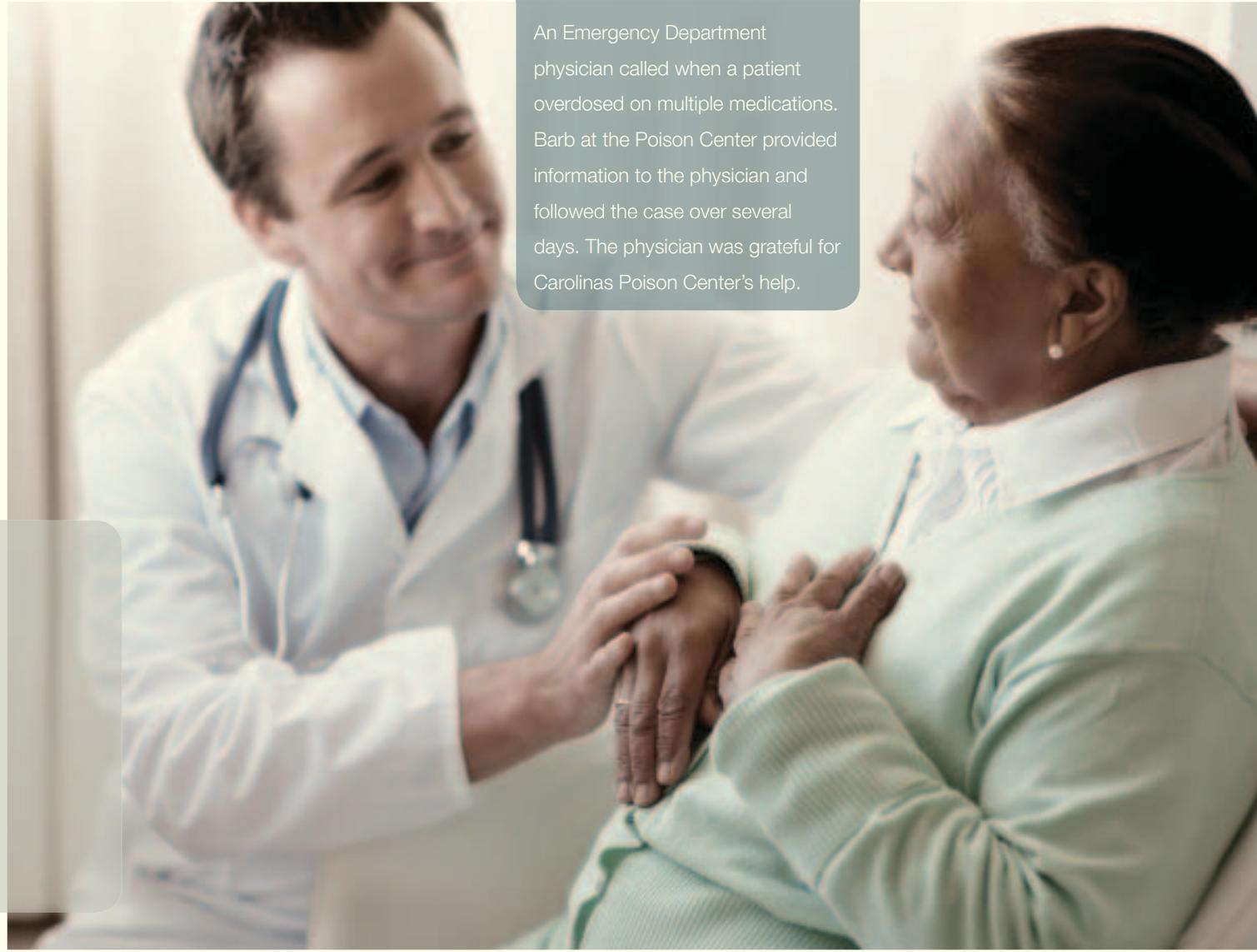
Our website anticipates your needs by providing poison safety information for each age and stage in life. You can easily find information that is meaningful to you. Wondering if glow sticks can hurt your child? What should you know about herbal supplements? Our website can help you answer these questions.

Should you call the Poison Center for a bug bite or bee sting? You can find quick answers to these questions and more at **www.ncpoisoncenter.org**. We're saving you time, so you can spend it on what you love most.



We don't just help the general public. We assist doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals, too. In 2008/2009 fifteen percent of our poisoning exposure calls came from doctors and nurses.

“*I've always found Carolinas Poison Center willing to assist. We want you to know we appreciate you.*”



An Emergency Department physician called when a patient overdosed on multiple medications. Barb at the Poison Center provided information to the physician and followed the case over several days. The physician was grateful for Carolinas Poison Center's help.

## Reported Poisonings Treated at Healthcare Facilities

Healthcare Facility	Patients Already in Facility	Additional Patients Referred by CPC
Alamance Regional Medical Center	280	79
Albemarle Hospital	257	45
Alleghany Memorial Hospital	28	9
Angel Medical Center	60	25
Annie Penn Hospital	123	23
Anson Community Hospital	115	16
Ashe Memorial Hospital	83	14
Baptist Medical Center	2	0
Beach Medical Urgent Care	20	0
Beaufort County Hospital	108	24
Bertie Memorial Hospital	38	4
Betsy Johnson Regional Hospital	367	62
Bladen County Hospital	146	27
Blowing Rock Hospital	2	1
Blue Ridge Regional Hospital	69	19
Broughton Hospital	12	2
Brunswick Community Hospital	155	32
Brynn Marr Hospital	1	0
Caldwell Memorial Hospital	119	55
Camp LeJeune Naval Hospital	395	68
Cape Fear Hospital	109	44
Cape Fear Valley Medical Center	724	180
CarolinaEast Health System	298	63
Carolinas Medical Center	809	164
Carolinas Medical Center-Lincoln	157	61
Carolinas Medical Center-Mercy	106	23
Carolinas Medical Center-NorthEast	388	167
Carolinas Medical Center-Pineville	409	106

## Reported Poisonings Treated at Healthcare Facilities (cont.)

Healthcare Facility	Patients Already in Facility	Additional Patients Referred by CPC
Carolinas Medical Center-Randolph	34	3
Carolinas Medical Center-Union	301	67
Carolinas Medical Center-University	460	97
Carteret General Hospital	177	45
Catawba Valley Medical Center	167	70
Central Carolina Hospital	333	60
Central Prison Hospital	9	1
Central Regional Hospital	22	3
Charles A. Cannon Jr. Memorial Hospital	36	6
Chatham Hospital	76	14
Cherokee Indian Hospital	59	11
Cherry Hospital	17	0
Cherry Point Naval Hospital	20	1
Chowan Hospital	70	12
Cleveland Regional Medical Center	223	77
Columbus Regional Healthcare System	155	28
Crawley Memorial Hospital	1	0
Davie County Hospital	60	18
Davis Regional Medical Center	102	20
Dorothea Dix Hospital	19	0
Dosher Memorial Hospital	96	13
Duke Health Raleigh Hospital	84	19
Duke University Hospital	498	90
Duplin General Hospital	160	18
Durham Regional Hospital	199	63
FirstHealth Montgomery Memorial Hospital	56	13
FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital	352	60
FirstHealth Richmond Memorial Hospital	120	23

*Reported Poisonings Treated at Healthcare Facilities (cont.)*

<b>Healthcare Facility</b>	<b>Patients Already in Facility</b>	<b>Additional Patients Referred by CPC</b>
Forsyth Medical Center	160	103
Franklin Regional Medical Center	120	33
Frye Regional - Alexander Campus	1	0
Frye Regional Medical Center	182	51
Gaston Memorial Hospital	405	161
Grace Hospital	103	43
Granville Medical Center	61	11
Halifax Regional Medical Center	231	50
HealthEast Family Care	2	0
HealthEast Outer Banks Medical Center	8	0
Heritage Hospital	67	16
High Point Regional Health System	414	77
Highlands-Cashiers Hospital	12	4
Highsmith Rainey Express Care	14	5
Holly Hill Mental Health Services	5	0
Hoots Memorial Hospital	30	11
Hugh Chatham Memorial Hospital	98	30
Iredell Memorial Hospital	202	58
J. R. Jones Medical Center	13	3
John Umstead Hospital	7	0
Johnston Memorial Hospital	240	78
Kings Mountain Hospital	123	30
Lake Norman Regional Medical Center	138	55
Lenoir Memorial Hospital	136	16
Lexington Memorial Hospital	233	47
Maria Parham Hospital	175	41
Martin General Hospital	77	12
McDowell Hospital	241	37

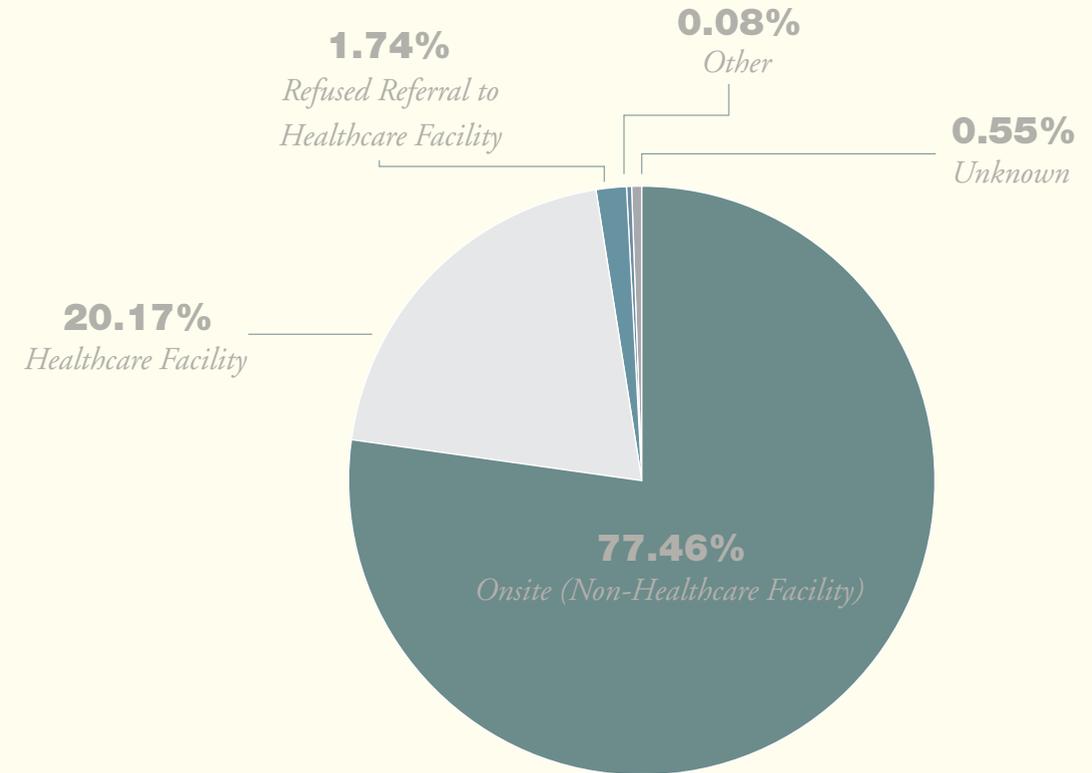
*Reported Poisonings Treated at Healthcare Facilities (cont.)*

<b>Healthcare Facility</b>	<b>Patients Already in Facility</b>	<b>Additional Patients Referred by CPC</b>
MedWest-Harris	99	20
MedWest-Haywood	107	107
MedWest-Swain	64	12
Memorial Mission Medical	203	125
Mission Hospital	93	41
Morehead Memorial Hos	231	45
Moses H. Cone Behavioral Health	16	2
Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital	544	154
Murphy Medical Center	94	25
Nash General Hospital	338	53
New Hanover Regional Medical Center	381	143
Northern Hospital of Surry County	85	38
Onslow Memorial Hospital	260	96
Our Community Hospital	2	1
Pardee Hospital	231	41
Park Ridge Hospital	80	20
Pender Memorial Hospital	45	15
Person Memorial Hospital	123	15
Pitt County Memorial Hospital	64	69
Presbyterian Hospital	345	100
Presbyterian Hospital - Huntersville	227	76
Presbyterian Hospital - Matthews	204	123
Pungo District Hospital Corporation	30	2
Randolph Hospital	286	77
Rex Hospital	189	79
Roanoke-Chowan Hospit	78	18
Rowan Regional Medical Center	282	56
Rutherford Hospital	121	56

*Reported Poisonings Treated at Healthcare Facilities (cont.)*

<b>Healthcare Facility</b>	<b>Patients Already in Facility</b>	<b>Additional Patients Referred by CPC</b>
Sampson Regional Medical Center	219	19
Sandhills Regional Medical Center	112	13
Scotland Memorial Hospital	167	31
Southeastern Regional Medical C	398	71
St. Luke's Hospital	76	6
Stanly Regional Medical Center	264	49
Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital	11	4
The Outer Banks Hospital	153	32
Thomasville Medical Center	159	44
Transylvania Community Hospital	124	32
UNC Hospitals	364	90
V.A. Medical Center Asheville	23	2
V.A. Medical Center Durham	38	3
V.A. Medical Center Fayetteville	34	2
V.A. Medical Center Salisbury	16	0
Valdese Hospital	35	16
Wake County Alcoholism Treatment Center	1	0
Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center	229	123
WakeMed	860	207
WakeMed - Apex Healthplex	84	20
WakeMed - Cary	399	87
WakeMed - North Healthplex	169	38
Washington County Hospital	33	5
Watauga Medical Center	85	45
Wayne Memorial Hospital	194	78
Wesley Long Community Hospital	564	75
Wilkes Regional Medical Center	140	47
Wilson Memorial Hospital	330	42
Womack Army Medical Center	340	76

*Where were the poisonings managed?*



Carolinas Poison Center also takes calls about poisonous plants. Our website has pictures of the most common poisonous indoor and outdoor plants in the state.

“*You and your site were extremely helpful. You were wonderful to help me stay at home and know that I was going to be ok.*”

An adult called the center when she ate a mushroom thought to be safe. After starting to feel sick, she began searching online for what to do. She found the number to Carolinas Poison Center and some tips about mushrooms. She thanked the nurse specialist who handled her call for taking care of her.



# ¿Se Habla Español?

Growth in the Hispanic population rose steadily in North Carolina in the 1990s. North Carolina had the fastest growing population of Hispanics in the country, according to one economic development center, with more than 300,000 new residents. By 2008, about 7.5 percent of North Carolina's total population was estimated to be Hispanic.

Carolina's Poison Center has 24/7 access to interpreters for non-English speaking callers. We continue to reach the changing face of North Carolina through participation in Hispanic health events and Spanish education materials.

In 2009, the center produced two companion pieces for Hispanic parents and caregivers related to medication dosing safety.

Both educational items emphasize the immediate help that the Poison Center provides when someone has questions or concerns about giving medicine to children.

- *Dosis Apropriadas De Acetaminofén Para Niños* is a medicine dosing tool for parents who give acetaminophen (a pain reliever) to their children.
- *Como darle Acetaminofeno a su Hijo* is a DVD that highlights a common parenting scenario that could lead to uncertainty or confusion when dosing acetaminophen.

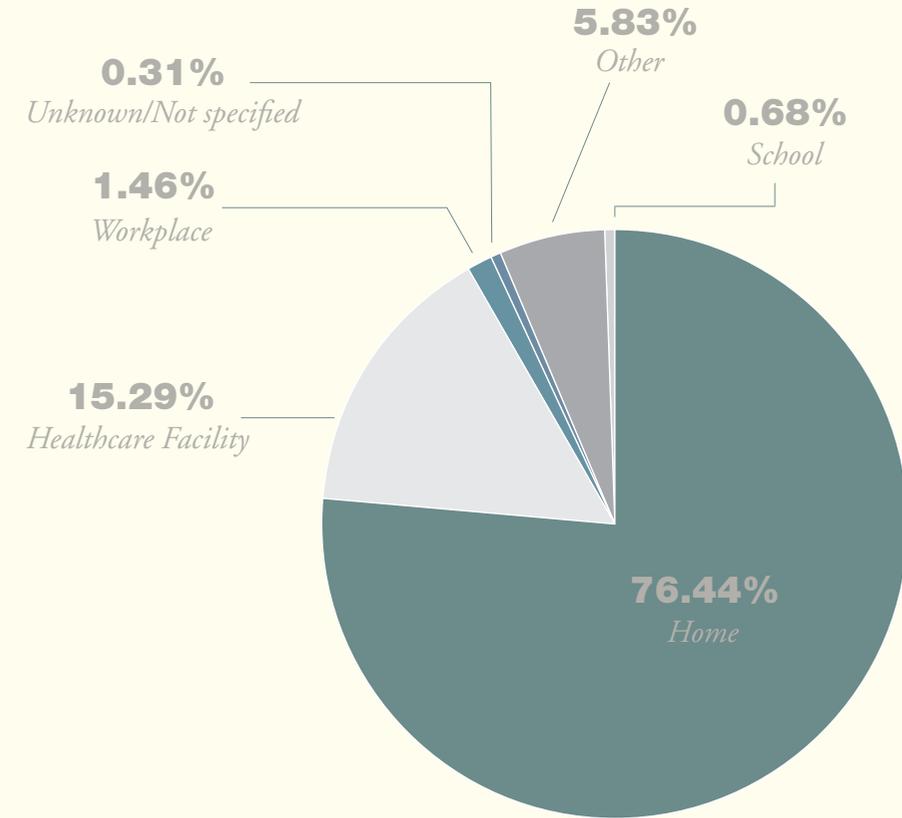


# Learning How We Help

One of the Poison Center's primary goals is to prevent poisonings, which are a significant and largely preventable public health problem. We do this by reaching out to the public with education and information. We also work with other health organizations that touch the public as well. Safe Kids, School Nurses' Association of North Carolina, Fire & Life Safety Educators, UNC Institute on Aging and North Carolina Division of Public Health are just a few of our partners.

In 2008 and 2009, Carolinas Poison Center distributed more than 150,000 educational items like poison safety brochures, refrigerator magnets, dosing spoons and phone stickers-- all with YOU in mind. We reached individuals, schools, daycare facilities, hospitals, businesses and community organizations with our poison prevention message.

## Where did calls originate?



Did you know that you can call Carolinas Poison Center for drug information and drug IDs? Law enforcement does.

“*Your phone number is the most helpful in the police department phone book.*”

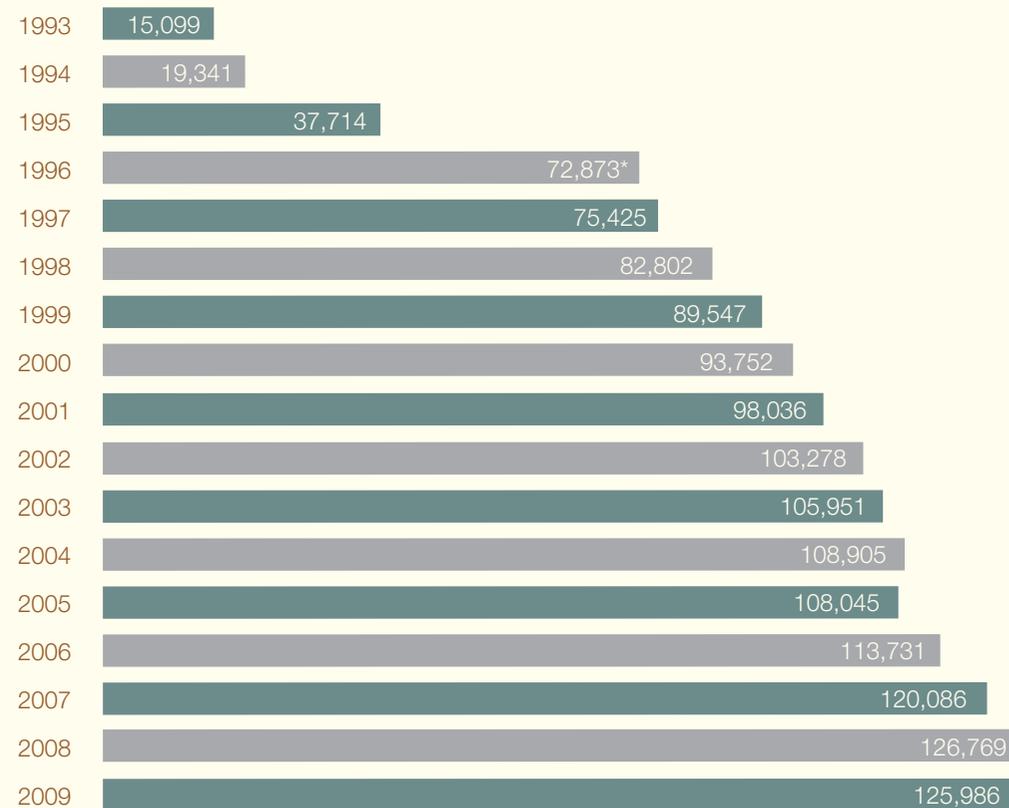


A police officer called when he was searching for drug identification information about a pill he found. Linda at the Poison Center assisted him. He told her that he found the Poison Center to be invaluable.

# Protecting Your Health

We are constantly alert to widespread dangers that could put your health at risk. Since we are the call center for the state concerning exposures to and information about poisonings, we know if something big is about to happen. We send real-time data to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and to the National Poison Data System. This means we're always looking for health alerts or outbreaks like H1N1 flu. In 2009, Carolinas Poison Center operated the emergency help line for North Carolinians with questions about H1N1 flu medicine or vaccine.

## Call volume growth



\*First full year as state poison center.



Carolinan Poison Center

*Uncompromising Excellence. Commitment to Care.*

*[www.ncpoisoncenter.org](http://www.ncpoisoncenter.org)*

1-800-222-1222