



The Other *Emergency Number*

*When you come in contact with
poison, every second counts.
Do you know who to call?*

Everyone knows the number to call in an emergency: 911.

But did you know there's a second emergency number you should keep at hand? It's **800-222-1222**. That's the number to the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center, which operates around the clock out of the University of Arizona's College of Pharmacy.

AT THE READY

Registered pharmacists answer calls for help and information when someone has:

- Ingested or been exposed to a poisonous substance
- Taken inappropriate legal or illegal drugs or the wrong dose
- Been bitten or stung by an animal that causes a reaction
- Questions about medications, herbal remedies, chemicals or exposure to a potential hazard
- Symptoms of poisoning or exposure to a poisonous substance but doesn't know why

When you call the center, it's like visiting a doctor or emergency room, just on the phone.

As each of the 178 average daily calls comes in, toxicology experts perform triage, determining which require immediate attention and which can wait a few minutes.

Center staff can recommend an at-home treatment or suggest that the next step would be to visit a doctor, go to an urgent care center or hang up and call 911.

"You can call us every time and we would direct you," says Keith Boesen, Pharm.D., the center's managing director. "We can help you make that decision."

Dispatchers at 911 also will connect a caller to the center if it's warranted, Boesen says. That conversation could result in canceling the

dispatch of a first responder and finding more appropriate help for the caller.

The center acts as a partner in your medical care that will save you time and money. As such, you can expect someone at the center to make a follow-up call to see how you're doing.

GET THE 411

Not all calls to the center involve an emergency. About half are requests for information, Boesen says. Recent call topics included the safety of medication used by pregnant and lactating women, the prevalence of K2 and other synthetic marijuana, and the possibility of radiation exposure from the Japanese disaster.

"We have expertise in radiation, hazardous materials, medicines, medicine interactions, stings and bites," says Mazda Shirazi, M.D., Ph.D., medical director of the center. The center can tap experts throughout the university, including professors who study poisonous mushrooms or dangerous reptiles. Callers can also get information on poison prevention.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The center is at work for you and the community even if you never call it.

Its database can quickly identify emerging health concerns such as a food bacteria outbreak, water contamination or infectious disease. Doctors and other health professionals consult with the center when treating




CALL

Post This Number

Have the number to the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center readily available:
800-222-1222.

patients. Shirazi, for instance, was able to determine that an emergency patient with acute kidney and liver failure suffered from overuse of acetaminophen.

The center maintains information on new antivenoms, new drug interactions, and new agents and drugs that come into the community. It trains healthcare providers on specific exposure issues found around the world. It provides public health information.

"We do much more than our name conveys," Shirazi says. 



Have the Right Info Ready

When you call the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center, the person answering the phone will ask about:

- Symptoms you are experiencing
- Type of exposure or interaction you suspect may have triggered the symptoms
- Brand name of medicine or chemical you might have been exposed to
- Time period between suspected exposure and onset of symptoms

Your call is anonymous and confidential. "We want people to call us without any fear of getting in trouble," Boesen says.

There's an App for That!

A free application for iPhone lets you quickly contact the nearest poison control center. Apps for other smartphones are in the works.

The app, available on the iTunes website under "Poison Help," also provides poison prevention tips and a link to the American Association of Poison Control Centers website.

The Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center handles all calls in the state except for Maricopa County. It's one of 57 poison control centers nationwide.