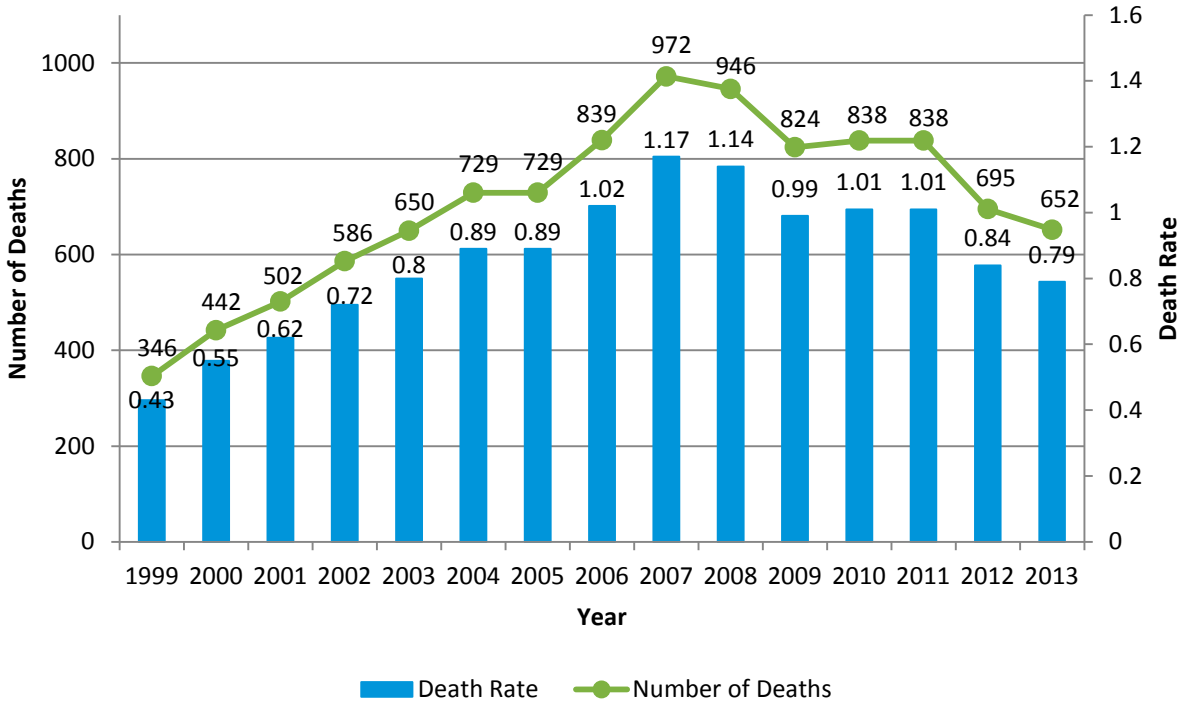
SAFE KIDS WORLDWIDE

Poisoning Safety Fact Sheet (2015)

Fatalities

- 652 children ages 19 and under died from poisonings in 2013.[1] 574 of these deaths, or 88%, were drug-related.[1]
  - 90% of children (587) who died from a poisoning were ages 15 to 19.[1]
  - 71% of children (460) who died from a poisoning were boys.[1]
- The poisoning death rate among children has fallen 33% since reaching a peak in 2007.[1]

1999-2013 Poisoning* Fatalities and Death Rate Among Children Ages 19 and Under



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

Injuries

- 119,003 children ages 19 and under were seen in emergency rooms for nonfatal poisonings in 2013.[1]

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.[2]

- 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.[2]
- 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.[2]
- 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.[2]
- 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%).[2]
- For every 10 poison exposures in children, approximately nine occur in the home.[3 4]

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.[5]
- 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.[6]

Poison control centers:

- Half of the 2 million calls to poison control centers in 2012 were for exposures and ingestions among children ages 5 and under.[5]
- Each dollar spent on a poison control center saves approximately $7 to $15 in unnecessary health care expenses.[7 8]
- 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.[9]
- Because of their high metabolic rates and high tissue oxygen demands, children are biologically at increased risk of CO poisoning when exposed to CO.[10]

References

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[2] 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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[4] Consumer Product Safety Commission. CPSC warns that 9 out of 10 unintentional child poisonings occur in the home. News from CPSC, March 18, 2009. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Website. Available from: http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml09/09159.html. Accessed: November 3, 2014.

[5] Mowry JB et al. 2012 Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' National Poison Data System (NPDS): 30th Annual Report. Clin Toxicol (Phila). 2013; 51(10): 949-1229.

[6] National Capital Poison Center. The Most Dangerous Poisons for Children. Available from: http://www.poison.org/prevent/dangerous.asp. Accessed November 3, 2014.

[7] 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.
[8] 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.
[9] Bronstein AC, Spyker DA, Cantilena LR, et al. 2010 Annual report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' national poison data system (NPDS): 28th annual report. Alexandria, VA: American Association of Poison Control Centers, 2011.
[10] 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 February 2015. If you have a question about this factsheet, please call 202-662-0600.