



COLLEGE OF
PHARMACY
NEW MEXICO POISON &
DRUG INFORMATION CENTER

ABOUT YOUR POISON CENTER

Supported by UNM Children's Hospital

1. Who answers the phones?

The New Mexico Poison & Drug Information Center (NMPDIC) has 12 pharmacist Specialists in Poison Information (10 certified) and 1 pharmacy technician.

2. Who does the poison center serve?

Any person in New Mexico may call the poison center. We have the capability to provide service in over 80 languages.

3. What does the poison center do?

The poison center helps triage patients (determine if a hospital visit is needed) with exposure to any substance that may be toxic. This includes medications, chemicals, plants, mushrooms, venomous animals (snakes, scorpions), food poisoning, and others. We keep more than 80% of those who call us at home, saving the state healthcare dollars and resources. We kept 83% at home in FY23, for an estimated cost savings of \$11.37 million.

4. When do people call the poison center?

The poison center is open and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The peak call volume is from 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM, with 26% of calls during that time frame.

5. How many calls does the poison center take?

We took 25,248 calls in FY23.

6. What types of calls does the poison center get?

In FY23, 84.3% were human exposures, 3.6% were animal exposures, 7.9% were drug information, and 1.4% were other information.

7. What substances are involved in poisoning?

The most frequent substances in FY23 were analgesics (pain relievers), household cleaners, cosmetics, antidepressants, antihistamines, alcohols, cardiovascular drugs, sedatives, and gases (such as those generated when mixing bleach with cleaners). There were 247 exposures to cannabis (120 edible) compared to 241 exposures in FY22 (131 edible).

8. What ages are involved in poisoning exposures?

Most exposures occur in adults compared to children. The Poison Center managed 1,538 pediatric cases (0-19 years) per 100,000 and 1,050 adult cases (>19 years) per 100,000. The highest exposure rate in children is 1-2 years of age and 20-29 years of age for adults.

9. Who calls the poison center?

In FY23, 34% of calls were from a healthcare provider, 23.7% were from a parent, 25.8% were from the patient themselves, 2.7% were from other relatives, 2.1% were from a spouse, 1.6% were from a grandparent, and 0.1% were from someone else in the home.

10. Where did the calls come from?

In FY23, we received calls from all 33 counties in New Mexico. The counties with the highest number of human exposures per 100,000 residents were Bernalillo, Sandoval, Santa Fe, Dona Ana, and San Juan, all with more than 6 exposures per 100,000.

11. Why do people call the poison center?

The most common reason for a call is accidental exposure (26%). The next most common reason is suicide attempts (20.5%), followed by therapeutic error (double dose or accidental misuse of medication) (17.4%). Other reasons include misuse of a household product (8.1%), adverse drug reaction (4.1%), environmental exposure (carbon monoxide, natural gas) (4.7%), substance abuse (3.5%), workplace exposure (2.8%), bites/stings (2.0%), and food poisoning (1.2%).

12. How is the poison center funded?

Although the Poison Center has served New Mexico for over 40 years, it only recently became an official agency in New Mexico through legislative action in 2013 (Senate Bill 140). Nearly 93.7% of its funding comes from the state of New Mexico (\$2.2 million in FY23). A small portion comes from a federal allocation that benefits all poison centers (6%). The poison center provides its services free of charge to any callers.

13. How does the poison center help to prevent poisonings?

The poison center's Health Education Consultant utilizes various platforms, such as social media, health fairs, and virtual and live presentations, to provide poison prevention education to the public across the state. Last year's educational efforts continued to focus on securing naloxone and fentanyl testing strips for distribution; presenting a research project on Determining How Effective Radio Public Service Announcements Are At Driving Call Volumes Within The Navajo Nation; and hosting a live social media question and answer session on pet safety that received participants across the nation.

