



DID YOU KNOW?

**THE GEORGIA POISON CENTER
2009 ANNUAL REPORT**

**Saving lives and preventing poisonings
for over a decade...**



**...but did you even know we
were here?**

Who We Are...



Dr. Robert Geller, Medical Director lecturing to toxicology fellows.



Dr. Stephanie Hon, Assistant Director providing updates to Public Health Specialists on new H1N1 Flu Protocols.



Dr. Gaylord Lopez, Director preparing for Skype interview to Savannah's WTOG 11 News on Poison Safety.

The decade of the 00's will long be remembered for the tragedies we experienced, both here in the United States and abroad. From the terrorist attacks of 911, to the destruction caused by the Gulf Coast hurricanes and the Asian Tsunami, to the H1N1 Flu pandemic, lives have been forever changed.

Fortunately for poison centers across the country, the past decade brought us significant triumphs that moved our network in the right direction. For the first time in the 50-year history of poison centers, the Federal Government stepped in and provided both limited funding for the poison network and toll-free, nationwide phone access to the public for center access. While these were positive steps for our organization, we all knew that much more work was needed. Centers were still closing; many others continue to be threatened by closure. Clearly, new funding strategies must be developed. Given that most states have been tightening their respective budget belts and cuts are being handed down to individual poison centers, the struggles with funding will unfortunately continue on for the foreseeable future.

What other issues will the coming decade present as challenges to us? It is increasingly apparent that we have to re-configure how the public accesses our services. The days of picking up a traditional telephone and calling are rapidly fading. We must keep pace with the technology of today or at least stay within striking distance of it. We at the Georgia Poison Center believe we are poised to meet these new challenges and provide the residents of Georgia with the information they need utilizing state-of-the-art communications technology. Accessing YOUR poison center and providing you with prompt, accurate information, along with lowering the healthcare costs associated with poisonings, are our primary goals. We are committed to this mission.

Did you know...



...we are the only poison center in Georgia?

Yep, that's right! We provide service to all Georgians, all nine million plus of you! As one of the busiest poison centers in the country and the only one in Georgia, we receive calls daily ranging from physicians and emergency medical personnel to concerned parents. We are staffed by highly skilled physicians, pharmacists, nurses, and other poison experts 24 hours a day, 365 days a year who offer confidential advice on poison diagnosis, treatment, and information. It is our goal to provide the provision of prompt and accurate poison information to those who access our services. We continuously strive to:

- Educate residents of Georgia in the areas of poison prevention and first-aid.
- Educate healthcare professionals in the areas of clinical toxicology, poisoning epidemiology, poison prevention, toxicological diagnosis and care.
- Provide stable and continuous delivery of quality poison center services to Georgians.

Did you know...



...anything can be a poison?

A poison is a particular chemical that can kill or injure a person. Any product used outside of its original intent may become a poison. Whether swallowed, inhaled, splashed in the eye or on the skin, a poison can be deadly.

Whoever coined the phrase “Too much of one thing can kill you” was right. A person can abuse medical prescriptions by taking too much of one or mixing multiple medications. More often than not, eating too many sweets for persons with particular medical conditions can cause serious adverse effects. Even drinking too much water in a short period of time can be deadly.

It is important to be informed on the correct dosage of medications, the proper application of household products and safe storage of medications and household products that could save your life. If you have any question concerning a particular product dosing or proper usage, call the Georgia Poison Center. There are professionals standing by 24/7 to ensure your safety.

Did you know...



... child resistant isn't child proof?

Children have become increasingly clever over the past decade. Did you know some children can open child resistant containers? It's true! In fact, the Georgia Poison Center received 42,590 calls pertaining to unintentional exposures of children under the age of 5. That is over 99% of our total calls involving children under 5 years old!

The Poison Prevention Packaging Act (PPPA), established in the early 1970s, was in response to the high incidence of unintentional poisonings among young children. There has been a remarkable decline in reported deaths from childhood poisonings because of it. A child resistant package is defined as one of significant difficulty to be opened by children of 5 years of age. But for the persistent child, opening this packaging is mere child's play. Every household should practice simple, yet practical, ways of preventing poisonings. These include:

- Storing medicines and vitamins in locked cabinets
- Keeping medicine and vitamins in the original container
- Using child resistant packaging and replace caps tightly
- Never calling medicine "candy"

Did you know...



... we provide public health information?

The Georgia Poison Center supports the Georgia Department of Community Health's mission by providing public emergency services. The Georgia Poison Center aids in responding to calls affecting the public, including public health emergencies, outbreaks, bioterrorism threats, and any other issues needing immediate response. In addition, the Georgia Poison Center provides comprehensive training to healthcare professionals statewide, providing critical skills necessary to treat persons exposed to toxic substances.

During flu season, the Georgia Poison Center provides a 24/7 hotline staffed by trained professionals to answer your important concerns involving seasonal flu and H1N1. From providing vaccine location to information regarding adverse reactions, we are on the front line of defense. Since October 2009, we have received over 1,300 calls.

We are also the official statewide resource for the provision of protocol-driven treatment and prevention advice for animal bites and rabies exposures.

As you can image, we stay pretty busy!

Did you know...



... our service existed?

If not, you definitely know now! The Georgia Poison Center had a very busy year. Saving lives and preventing poisonings is what we do...and well. Here is how we measured up in 2009.

- We answered 115,669 calls. Busy. We know!
- Of these calls, 83,719 were human exposures and 7,866 were animal exposure calls.
- 75% of these calls avoided an unnecessary trip to the emergency room and doctor's office.
- We called 46,845 patients back. We want to make sure you're okay.
- Over 50% of our calls involved curious kids under 5 years of age.
- We responded to 24,084 information calls. Inquisitive minds want to know!
- 1,321 of our information calls pertained to flu-related concerns.
- We handled 1,933 calls related to possible rabies exposures.
- We helped other healthcare professional by answering 22,165 of their calls.

Did you know...



... we provide poison prevention education?

The Georgia Poison Center's Education Department conducted more than 70 educational outreach activities during 2009. These activities included classroom presentations, health fairs, and training programs. The training program, better known as the Instructor Training Program (ITP), currently has 84 trained volunteer instructors. These instructors are an extension of the education efforts provided by our staff in the metro Atlanta area. They conduct poison prevention education activities in their respective communities, statewide.

The Education Department also coordinates the statewide Advance Hazmat Life Support (AHLS) and Explosion & Blast Injury courses. For more information about community outreach activities, or to request a speaker or materials for an event, you can reach our education department directly by calling 404-616-9235.

Did you know...



... our services are free?

The Georgia Poison Center is your poison center, providing free, life-saving diagnosis and treatment advice. Over 74% of poisoning calls received in 2009 were assessed and managed at the caller's current site. In other words, no unnecessary trips to the emergency room or the doctor's office. Our main goal is to use our services as a preventative strategy to save lives while they are at the place of exposure. This in turns save you not only time, but money!

We are a non-profit organization supported by Federal and State grants and private donations. This funding allows us to provide you with such a vital service, helping to impact the lives of Georgians and aid in continuing educational efforts of poison prevention and professional training. If you would like to make a donation to the Georgia Poison Center, contact us at 404.616.9000

Now that you know...



... spread the word!

The Georgia Poison Center is here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. We provide poison information services not only for you, but your friends, neighbors, co-workers, pets, and even strangers! Now that you know what we do, be sure to share that information with others. You might just save a life. Our phone number is 1.800.222.1222.

For any information regarding the
Georgia Poison Center please contact us:

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P.O Box 26066
Atlanta, GA 30303-3050
1.800.222.1222 poison emergencies
404.616.9000 general inquiries
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