



2024 Annual Report

Ontario Poison Centre



About the Ontario Poison Centre

The Ontario Poison Centre (OPC) has been a trusted resource for poison information and management guidance for the public and healthcare providers across Ontario since 1970.

OPC is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and operated by the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. In 2012, OPC extended support to Manitoba, and in 2016 also began providing toxicology guidance to healthcare providers in Nunavut.

At the heart of the OPC's work is its 24/7 toxicology telephone consultation line, assisting both the public and healthcare professionals. In 2024 alone, the centre responded to over 65,000 cases from Ontario, Manitoba, and Nunavut.

Beyond emergency consultations, the OPC collaborates with healthcare providers, government agencies, injury prevention groups, and public health organizations to enhance poison awareness and prevention. The centre is dedicated to advancing medical toxicology knowledge through healthcare provider education, public outreach, and toxicovigilance initiatives — ensuring timely, life-saving information is always accessible.

OPC is committed to protecting and educating the communities it serves. It is a recognized member of the Canadian Association of Poison Centres and Clinical Toxicology (CAPCCT) and an affiliate of America's Poison Centres (APC).



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Our Team

Medical Director: Emily Austin, MD, FRCPC

Assistant Medical Director: Connie Mackenzie, MD, FRCPC, MSc

Clinical Manager: Anna Leah Desembrana, RN

Specialists in Poison Information (SPIs): There are 46 SPIs comprised of nurses and pharmacists with additional training in toxicology.

Consulting Toxicologists: Howard An (MD, FRCPC), David Juurlink (MD, PhD, FRCPC, FAACT, FACMT), Alya Kamani (MD, FRCPC), Chris Lazongas (MD, FRCPC), Kaitlynn Rigg (MD, FRCPC), Morgan Riggan (MD, FRCPC, FACMT), Henry Swoboda (MD, FACEM, FACMT), Margaret Thompson (MD, FRCPC)

Adjunct Experts: The OPC collaborates with experts from diverse fields, including botany, mycology, herpatology, biochemistry, and other specialties as required.

Administrative Support: Donna Tedesco, Richelle Grandison

IT Support Specialist: Tan Quach

Senior Data Analyst: Justin Lo

Interprofessional Education Specialist: Allison Davis, RN

Knowledge Translation Program Managers: Katie Orr (RN), Chad Larabie

The OPC is grateful to **Dr. Margaret Thompson** for over 20 years of leadership as Medical Director. Since 2000, she has guided the OPC's growth, expanding its services across two provinces and a territory, and establishing it as a centre of excellence in toxicology education. Dr. Thompson has trained hundreds of medical professionals, many now serving poison centres across Canada. Fortunately, Dr. Thompson continues to support the OPC as a consulting toxicologist.

OVER
20
YEARS OF
LEADERSHIP



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2024 Key Facts and Statistics

In 2024,
OPC managed
65,910
cases of
human-related
exposures.

Poison specialists
assisted with an
average of
189
new cases a day.

OTHER FACTS

272
mushroom-related calls

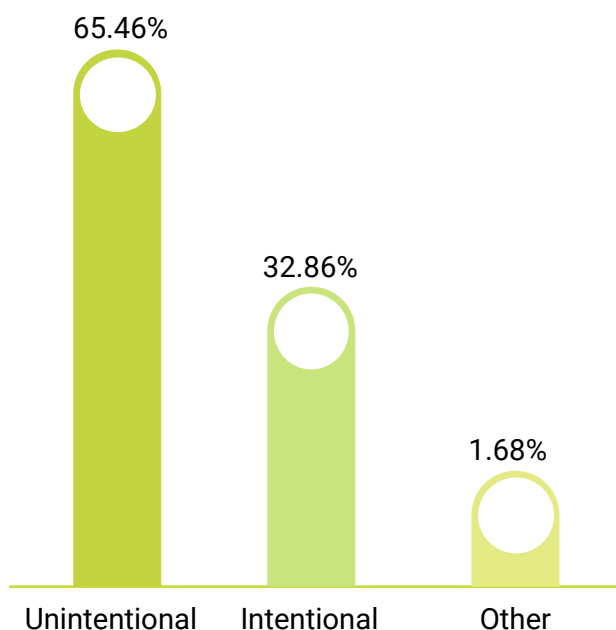
1785
plant-related calls

38
possible spider
envenomation calls

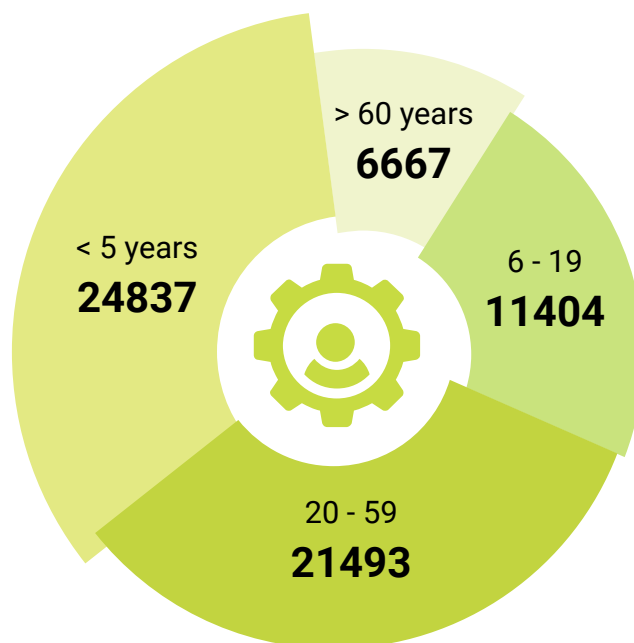
59% of calls to the OPC were about drug-related exposures including prescription and over-the-counter products.



REASON FOR EXPOSURE



AGE OF PATIENTS



Top 10 Substances Involved in Poisoning



TOP 10 DRUGS

Analgesics	Hormones and Hormone Antagonists
Antidepressants	Antiseizure Medications
Sedatives/Hypnotics/Antipsychotics	Antihistamines
Cardiovascular Medications	Vitamins
Stimulants and Street Drugs	Antimicrobials

Poison centre staff managed **5,658** calls involving acetaminophen this year.








TOP 10 NON-DRUGS

Cleaning Substances	Plants
Cosmetics/Personal Care Products	Fumes/Gases/Vapors
Alcohols	Pesticides
Foreign bodies/Toys/Miscellaneous	Hydrocarbons
Chemicals	Essential Oils



CALLER'S SITE OF EXPOSURE

	SITE	COUNT (%)
	Own Residence	40710 (56%)
	Healthcare Facility	29944 (42%)
	Other	1211 (1.6%)
	Workplace	142 (0.2%)
	School	142 (0.2%)

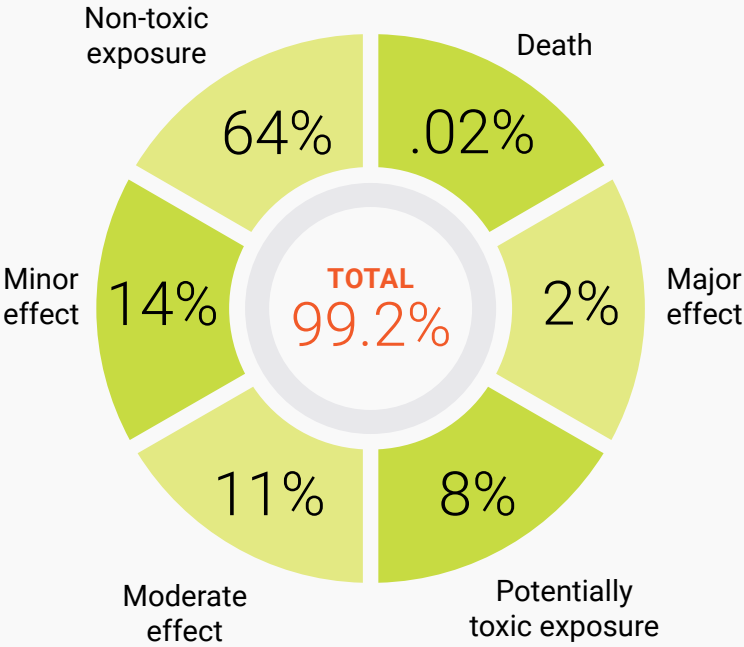
Poison centre staff referred only

7%

of out-of-hospital calls to the emergency department.

The data shows the origin of calls about poison exposures, with most coming from private residences and healthcare facilities.

MEDICAL OUTCOMES



POISONING CASES PER REGION

Number of calls from ON, MB, and NU		
Ontario calls	58641	87.17%
Nunavut calls	1031	1.53%
Manitoba calls	6238	9.27%
Total calls	65910	97.98%

Health Care Provider Education

In 2024, OPC continued to support nursing and medical learner education to enhance the clinical skills of health care providers in the diagnosis and management of poisoned patients.

Nurse Education with Indigenous Services Canada: OPC has established a partnership with Indigenous Health Services, providing toxicology education through their Telemedicine Rounds. This collaboration enables OPC to share knowledge to healthcare providers serving Indigenous communities, supporting them in the management of poisoned patients.

Collaboration with Ontario Health Emergency Department Nursing Education, Retention, and Workforce Program: OPC delivered foundational courses focused on recognizing, assessing, and treating poisoned patients. These courses provide professional development opportunities for nurses to stay updated on best practices in toxicology-related emergency care.

Medical Resident Rotation: In 2024, over 35 medical trainees from across Ontario and Canada participated in 4-week rotations at OPC, developing their knowledge in medical toxicology and gaining experience in the management of poisoned patients. Trainees in emergency medicine, internal medicine, anesthesia, critical care medicine, pediatric emergency medicine, public health, and occupational medicine participated in this rotation as part of their core training programs.

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology Subspecialty Program: OPC is one of the core training sites for the University of Toronto Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC) accredited subspecialty program in Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology. OPC also provides reciprocal training opportunities for trainees from the Western University RCPSC Clinical Pharmacology and Toxicology training program.



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Public Outreach

OPC is focused on enhancing its outreach to promote poisoning prevention across Ontario, with emphasis on three key areas: infrastructure development, evaluation, and strategic activities.

Partnerships, such as with AboutKidsHealth and Health Canada, have expanded our outreach, including work with Indigenous communities and rural areas. Social media campaigns have further boosted our reach in our poison prevention messages.

The OPC is building awareness through media campaigns on social media platforms and is participating in public health initiatives that provide critical information about safe practices and when to seek help.



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PUBLIC INFORMATION VIDEO:

Mushroom foraging video



NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK (MARCH 17-23) HIGHLIGHTS:

Proclamations received from across Ontario, including from Premier Doug Ford.

Ontario landmarks illuminated in green.

Dr. Margaret Thompson appears on Global News.

Campaign reached millions of impressions.

The CN Tower and Niagara Falls illuminated in green on March 17th in recognition of Poison Prevention Week.



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Research Activities

OPC participates in research and scholarly activities including identifying trends and outcomes of poisonings, safety and efficacy of antidotes, as well as developing education simulation. Research results are presented annually at major international conferences and published in peer reviewed journals.



CONTACT INFORMATION

PUBLIC

1-844-POISON -X (1-844-764-7669) available 24/7, including all holidays

Calls are free of charge.

All calls are confidential.

Access to certified toxicology experts for immediate assistance in managing poisoning emergencies.

Services available in multiple languages to assist our region's diverse population.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Ontario - 416-813-5900 or 1-800-268-9017

Manitoba - 1-855-776-4766

Nunavut - 1-866-913-7897



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