Kentucky Poison Control Center

Issue 1, Jan 2025

TOX-N-KY Provider Update

Kentucky Poison Control Center: More Than 70 Years Strong!

The Kentucky Poison Control Center (KPCC) began as a simple phone line in the emergency department of Children's Hospital (now Norton Children's) in 1954. No designated personnel were assigned to this line so calls were often handled by physicians in training. By 1964, a medical director was appointed to the "hotline" as part of pharmacy services and by 1979, two designated "poison specialists" were hired to handle incoming calls. From there the center grew into a department with its own specialized staff, eventually securing state and federal funding and the designation as the only accredited poison control center providing services to Kentucky. In 1977, the annual volume for the KPCC was 6,000 cases – today we manage nearly 39,000 cases per year, 35,000 of which are possible exposures. Our specialists are able to maintain 70% of these cases on-site and out of the healthcare system due to their non-toxic or minimally toxic nature. When exposures are seen in a healthcare facility, our specialists are ready to provide current and optimal recommendations for assessment and treatment of poisoning and will follow these cases until their toxicity has resolved to ensure continuity of care and answer additional questions as they arise.

The KPCC is staffed 24/7 by nurses and pharmacists with experience and extensive training in toxicology. All staff are expected to obtain national certification, once eligible, and recertify by examination every 7 years. The medical staff on the hotline is further supported by a 24/7 medical toxicologist on call. A provider in KY can request to conference with the toxicologist on call at any time and is encouraged to do so. We provide clinical education in toxicology to pharmacy and medical students and residents and look forward to providing more regular professional education opportunities annually. We are excited to bring you this inaugural re-issue of our quarterly newsletter and hope you find the content interesting and informative.

For some data insights from America's Poison Centers, please go to the National Poison Data System (NPDS) interactive platform at https://poisoncenters.org/national-poison-data-system, and keep an eye out for our annual report later this year!

Who We Are

Clinical Toxicologists:

Director
Ashley Webb, PharmD, MSc, DABAT, FAACT, AFACMT

Clinical Operations
Jay Adams, PharmD, DABAT

Clinical Pharmacy Specialist, Editor
Jan Scaglione, PharmD, MT, DABAT

Medical Toxicologists:

Medical Director
Peter Akpunonu, MD, FAAEM, FACEP, FACMT

Associate Medical Director
Matt Eisenstat, MD, FAAEM

Consultants:
Drew Micciche, MD
Jan Sullivan, MD, FAAP, FCCM, CPI

Specialists in Poison Information:

Jordon Blanton, BSN
Alicia Brogan, BSN, CSPI
Chris Boroomand, PharmD
Sarah Bravo, PharmD
Terra Brown, BSN
Barbara Chenault, ASN, CSPI
Brad Chevalier, BSN, CSPI
Ashley Green, BSN, CSPI
Kaila Hollkamp, PharmD
Bryan Murphy, PharmD, BSN
Jessica Purser, BSN, CSPI
Sara Reinke, BSN, CSPI
Lois Taurman, ASN, CSPI
Michelle Vitols, BSN, CSPI
Jay Vowels, BSN, CSPI

Poison Prevention Coordinator:

Maria Chapman, BA

Have you talked with the poison control center recently?

Please take a few minutes to complete our healthcare provider survey and help us improve the service we provide

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J7B82K5

Taking the "fun" out of fungi – Surveillance of Diamond Shroomz® Chocolate Bar Exposures

In June of 2024, national poison center surveillance was alerted to significant adverse effects after consumption of Diamond Shruumz® brand chocolate bars, gummies, and cones. While the purpose of these products was purportedly micro-dosing and supposedly there were no ingredients of hallucinogenic mushrooms in the chocolate bars, several patients suffered sympathomimetic effects including seizures, coma, and respiratory depression following consumption of the product.

The national network of poison centers, via Americas Poison Centers surveillance team, began working with FDA and CDC to quickly provide case definitions and collect cases from all 50 states. A recall was promptly issued. Although the exact cause for the symptoms has not fully been elucidated, the chocolate bars have been found to contain substances including muscimol (a component of the mushroom *Amanita muscaria*), psilocin (a hallucinogenic component of psilocybin mushrooms), desmethoxyyangonin, dihydrokavain, and kavain (components of Kava). Nationally, over 70 cases have been identified, including at least 9 in Kentucky. While state epidemiologists have taken over the investigation, this cases draws attention to the benefit of national near-real time medical surveillance provided by poison control centers through the National Poison Data System (NPDS). With these types an increase in availability of these products online, in states where they are legal, and/or through regulatory loopholes, the value of the poison center system is recognized for the quick detection of events as well as access to board certified toxicologists to assist with monitoring and management recommendations.

How Does Poison Center Surveillance Work?

Currently, there are 54 nationally accredited poison centers designated to the cover the entire US and all US territories. Each center uploads its de-identified data about every 8 minutes to a national database (the National Poison Data System, or NPDS).This system is monitored in real time for temporal and geographical anomalies in case volume, as well as for unusual clusters of symptoms or specific defined public health threats including all category A, B, and C bioterrorism agents. When an anomaly is detected, the surveillance team reaches out to the impacted poison center for more case information and makes a determination if the local/state health department should be alerted or a national response is required. While most anomalies do not rise to the level of a significant public health threat, the Diamond Shruumz® example highlights the benefit of a robust national system. This database utilizes product codes, check boxes, and drop-down menus rather than relying on free text, making poison center data unique in the ability to quickly highlight unusual trends. However, this system is dependent on healthcare providers in the state to reach out to the center with exposure cases. Even if you don't think you need recommendations for patient management, by notifying the center you have an exposure case, it improves our statewide and national real time surveillance.

Want to receive real time poison alerts for unusual poisoning cases that may affect your practice?

Sign up for our ready-op alert list. Use the link below to provide us with your information to receive a text alert for significant events that may impact volume or needs in your healthcare facility.

https://ky.readyop.com/fs/4m38/0086

In Memory of George Rodgers, Jr, MD, PhD

Dr. George Rodgers, a giant in the field of pediatrics, toxicology, and poison control, passed away on Sunday, July 14, 2024. In 1981 Rodgers stepped in as Director of the Kentucky Poison Control Center and took the center from a telephone on the wall to an entire department. He secured state funding and hired professional staff dedicated to the service and ensured a thriving professional program.

Even after stepping down as director and medical director, Rodgers remained an associate medical director and a dedicated supporter. Stories from seasoned specialists he hired and trained, along with memos from his leadership, spoke volumes about his passion.

Rodgers was always willing to share his vast knowledge. His unwavering passion was always invigorating and educational. He possessed a rare combination of honesty, kindness, and unflinching support, even during challenging times.

Dr. Rodgers' legacy is the strong foundation he built for the KPCC. His dedication to the center and the field will be deeply missed. We will continue to honor his work by providing exceptional care to those in need.

Sign up to receive this newsletter!

If you're not a subscriber and you would like to see future issues, click the link below to make sure you don't miss out!
https://kypoisoncontrol.com/e-news-updates-subscription/

Copyright © 2025 Kentucky Poison Control Center, All rights reserved.

Kentucky Poison Control Center
PO Box 35070
Louisville, KY 40232-5070
www.KYPoisonControl.com