



Wisconsin  
Poison Center  
Serving people of all ages.

# Managing the Poisoned Patient

The role of the Wisconsin Poison Center

# Objectives:

By the end of the session, the learner will:

- ❖ Recognize the value of services from the Wisconsin Poison Center (WPC)
- ❖ Understand that there are no adverse HIPAA implications from communicating with the WPC
- ❖ Understand the value in contacting the Poison Center as soon as possible when dealing with a poison-related emergency
- ❖ Be ready to meet the need for improved communication
- ❖ Be ready to partner with the Poison Center in providing the best possible patient care

# Who calls the Wisconsin Poison Center?

- ❖ Anyone can experience a poison emergency, because any substance can be harmful if used in the wrong way, wrong amount, or by the wrong person.
  - ❖ Calls are answered live 24/7/365.
  - ❖ Poison Centers take calls about people of all ages
  - ❖ WPC takes calls from people/parents at home, school nurses, health care providers in clinics, ERs and inpatient units
  - ❖ Live help is provided to callers in 150 languages
  - ❖ In 2021 the WPC answered 38,391 calls. 35,733 of these calls were about some form of human exposure.

# Why do people call the Poison Center?

- ❖ For triage and recommendations when someone may have been exposed to something that could hurt them or just for information.

Eye exposures

Toxic gases and chemicals

Medication Errors

Pesticide Exposures

Envenomation

Intentional Ingestions

Food Poisoning

Adverse drug reactions

Street drugs

Accidental Ingestions

Heavy metals

Plant Toxicity

Pill Identification



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# Why do our members call the Poison Center?

- Because in Wisconsin, it's the standard of care!
- Over 12,000 exposure cases reported to the WPC in 2021 were treated in a healthcare facility. That's ~35% of the total cases.
- Most ED physicians routinely call the WPC regarding poison exposure patients to request additional recommendations or double check their management protocol.
- It's the most efficient way to ensure that the patient is receiving the most effective management of their exposure.



# Who answers the Poison Center calls?

Calls (cases) are managed by medical experts – Doctors, nurses and pharmacists who have extensive training in poison prevention and treatment.

- ❖ RNs and Pharmacists at the poison center are trained as Specialists in Poison Information (SPIs). After a time period of usually 2-3 years, they may qualify to sit for a national exam to become a Certified Specialist in Poison Information (CSPI).
- ❖ Available for consultation 24/7/365:
  - ❖ Medical Toxicologists are physicians who have advanced training and board certification in Toxicology,
  - ❖ Clinical Toxicologists are Nurses or PharmD's who have advanced training and board certification in toxicology.

# HIPAA Concerns



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Easy answer- there are none

- ❖ The federal government recognizes poison centers as health care providers performing a treatment activity to an individual.
  - ❖ The preamble to the Privacy Rule specifically mentions poison control centers, stating: *“We note that poison control centers are health care providers for purposes of this rule. We consider the counseling and follow-up consultation provided by poison control centers with individual providers regarding patient outcomes to be treatment. Therefore, poison control centers and other health care providers can share protected health information about the treatment of an individual without a business associate contract.”*<sup>4</sup>
- ❖ A letter recognizing WPC as a HIPAA-compliant partner can be provided upon request.

<sup>4</sup>Department of Health and Human Services. (2000, December 28). *Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information; Final Rule*. Retrieved from 45 CFR 164.501 Federal Register PP 82625-82626: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/privacy/hipaa/administrative/privacyrule/prdecember2000all8parts.pdf>

# How does the Poison Center become involved with a patient's care?

- ❖ There are several ways the poison center becomes involved, including:
  - ❖ Contact may be from an individual, where the SPI may refer the person to an ED. The WPC will then call report to the ED that individual is going to. WPC does not select the hospital for the patient.
    - ❖ Contact may be initiated by EMS providers.
    - ❖ Contact may be initiated by the ED when a patient arrived with a toxic-related concern.
    - ❖ Contact may be initiated by the inpatient care team.



# When should a call be initiated and what should be expected?

- ❖ The best time to call is as soon as a patient is identified with a poison, or toxin-related emergency.
  - ❖ A medication may also be considered a poison exposure.
- ❖ Early consultation with the poison center specialists can reduce time spent on the phone away from your patients.
  - ❖ Additionally, knowing what to expect and what interventions you may need will help you be prepared to provide the best possible care.
- ❖ Although every case is unique, the poison center specialists generally need to follow up on labs, interventions, reassessments and patient outcomes.



## Communication through the hospital course

- ❖ The WPC follows patients through their hospitalization. Depending on the situation this be until:
  - ❖ They have been asymptomatic during an observation time, and no new symptoms are expected to develop
  - ❖ All symptoms have resolved, patient is at their functional baseline and labs, vitals and EKG have returned to normal
  - ❖ The patient may have suffered a permanent injury related to their exposure requiring extended care, however no further toxicological interventions are expected
  - ❖ The patient has expired. The WPC does follow up with the medical examiner in these cases, and composes fatality reports.



# Communication through the hospital course-2



## ❖ When to expect a call about your patient?

- ❖ In the ED, the WPC will check initial labs and EKGs. Depending on the patient, they may need additional tests or interventions in which case the SPI will call to obtain results. They will also call to determine the patient disposition-admission or discharge.
- ❖ While inpatient, the Poison Center staff will call to follow up after the patient arrives to the unit. WPC will discuss monitoring and potential treatments, and make recommendations for tests as needed. Some time-sensitive labs may alter or determine further treatment, and the WPC will call for these results.
  - ❖ EpicCare is accessible to WPC staff at AdvocateAurora, Children's WI and Froedtert facilities.
- ❖ General follow-up calls are made daily, or more often as needed for those who are critically ill and may require additional interventions.
- ❖ Staff members should call the WPC with any questions, concerns, or any acute changes with the patient.

# The Purpose of Follow-up

- ❖ Allows the Poison Center staff re-evaluate patient progress.
- ❖ Ask for specific information to help guide current treatment.
- ❖ These re-assessments are focused, and can help ensure that the patient is receiving the best possible treatment.
  - ❖ WPC specialists can help determine if additional interventions may be needed or if the patient can safely be discharged.

# Recommendations

- ❖ Recommendations from the WPC are made to the provider (nurse, PA, NP, MD) caring for the patient. This may include specific labs, tests, or treatments.
- ❖ Anyone member of the treatment team is welcome to contact the WPC at any time to discuss or clarify the recommendations. Additionally, they are able to speak directly with the on-call toxicologist at any time, 24/7.





# Remember to call...

- ❖ Call the Wisconsin Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222
  - ❖ Whenever you have a patient who may have had a poison-related exposure
  - ❖ With any questions or concerns regarding drug interactions or adverse reactions
  - ❖ With any questions or concerns regarding your patient
- ❖ The Poison Center collaborates with the CDC and WI Department of Public Health to gather information on drug trends and outbreaks.



# We welcome your feedback!

- ❖ Please feel free to email the Wisconsin Poison Center leadership with any questions, concerns, or feedback:
- ❖ Kim Webber MBA,BSN, BA,RN, NEA-BC. Manager  
Wisconsin Poison Center: [kwebber@childrenswi.org](mailto:kwebber@childrenswi.org)
- ❖ Together we can provide the safest, most effective care!

