

One Oklahoman dies every day from unintentionally taking too much of a prescription medication.

Many unintentional poisonings happen in predictable, preventable ways.

Only take prescription medications prescribed for you. Dispose of unused medicines. Never drink alcohol while taking medication. Do not share your medication.

**Poison Control
Center
1-800-222-1222**

Live Injury-Free!

Unintentional Poisonings

Unintentional poisoning is the second leading cause of injury death in the United States, following only motor vehicle crashes. A poison is any substance that is harmful if enough is taken, including legally prescribed medications. The majority of unintentional poisoning deaths result from misuse and abuse of prescription medications. According to the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, Oklahoma has one of the highest rates of persons who misuse or abuse prescription medications in the nation.

United States

- 29,846 people died from unintentional poisoning in 2007.
- 95% of unintentional and undetermined poisoning deaths were due to drugs.
- 38% of unintentional poisoning deaths were due to prescription opioid medications including hydrocodone and oxycodone.
- 12% of unintentional poisoning deaths were due to other medications including antidepressants.
- Family and friends were often the source of the prescription drugs in unintentional poisoning fatalities.

Oklahoma

- In 2006, Oklahoma's rate of unintentional poisoning deaths was 1.5 times higher than the national average.
- Prescription opioid painkillers were 4 of the top 5 medications responsible for unintentional poisoning deaths of Oklahomans between 1994 and 2006.
- Methadone and hydrocodone (also known as Lortab or Vicodin) were the top two medications involved in unintentional poisoning deaths.
- Persons age 35-54 accounted for more than half of unintentional poisoning deaths due to prescription drugs.

Prevention

- Never share or sell your prescription drugs.
- Dispose of unused, unneeded, or expired prescription drugs.
- Keep pain medications in a safe place that can only be reached by people who take or give them.
- Keep medicines in their original bottles or containers.
- Monitor the use of medicines prescribed for children and teenagers.
- Never drink alcohol while taking medication.
- Consult your health care provider before taking new medications.
- Put the poison control number, 1-800-222-1222, on or near every home telephone and save it on your cell phone. The line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Internet Resources

- Oklahoma Poison Control Center - www.oklahomapoison.org
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Poisoning/index.html
- Poison Help - www.poisonhelp.hrsa.gov