# **Idaho Poison Control Facts**

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare contracts with the Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center (RMPDC) to staff a poison and drug hot line for Idahoans and health care professionals. By having a hot line for people to call for treatment information, a visit to the hospital may be prevented.

For every dollar spent on RMPDC, \$ 7 is saved in medical expenses. Poison Help 1-800-222-1222

## Highlights From RMPDC

Each year, the RMPDC receives over 25,000 calls from the public and Idaho health care professionals. Of these calls, 16,000 are for human exposure to drugs or other chemical substances; 8,000 are information calls, (usually drug identification or drug information), and 1,000 are animal exposure calls. This fact sheet describes poisoning episodes that happened in Idaho.

The RMPDC receives calls from a variety of places like family homes, hospitals and medical clinics, workplaces, pharmacies, veterinary clinics, nursing homes, schools and day cares. Over 80% of all calls to RMPDC, however, come from the family home. Only about 6% of calls come from hospitals, emergency clinics and physician's offices, combined. Although calls from this group are less frequent than from family homes, calls between emergency medicine doctors and RMPDC staff, tend to be more difficult cases that last much longer - as long as several hours to days.

Call Volume (As a Percent of All Calls) Among Idaho's Metropolitan Counties, 2005 to 2007

# Kootenai 9% Canyon 12% Bonneville 7% Bannock 6%

# **Demographics of Poison Exposure**

From 2005 to 2007, Ada County residents accounted for 25% of the total number of phone calls to the RMPDC for poison and drug information assistance. This call volume was followed by Canyon County residents (12%), Kootenai County (9%), Bonneville County (7%), and Bannock County (6%). The call rate (that is, the number of calls per 1,000 county residents) is significantly higher among Idaho's most populated (metropolitan) counties compared to its rural counties. The call rate among Idaho metropolitan counties is nine times greater than that of rural county populations.

### Drug Deaths in Idaho\*

Drug deaths to Idaho residents include all deaths where drug use/abuse was listed as an underlying cause of death. Drug-induced deaths include illegal, prescription, and over-the-counter drugs. There were 389 drug-induced deaths to Idaho residents from 2005 to 2007. The number of drug-induced deaths for Idaho residents increased 5% from 119 deaths in 2005 to 125 deaths in 2007.

From 2005 to 2007 the average-annual drug-induced death rate for Idaho was 8.8 deaths per 100,000 people. The drug-induced death rate for the United States (reported for 2005-the latest year available) was 11.3 deaths per 100,000 people. The difference in the two rates may be the higher rate of accidental drug-induced deaths in the U.S. The drug-induced suicide rate was 1.5 deaths per 100,000 people in Idaho and 1.4 deaths per 100,000 people in the U.S.

The most common substances attributed to drug-induced deaths in Idaho were methadone 17.5%, benzodiazepine 11.8%, hydrocodone 11.8%, antidepressant drugs 10.1%

### Route of Exposure

There are several different ways poisons can enter the body. How a person is exposed to a poison is called the "route of exposure." The most common route of exposure to poison substances is through eating or drinking. In Idaho, 80% of poison victims either ate or drank poison. Other ways of poison exposure are skin contact, eye contact, breathing into the lungs, stings or bites by insects or animals, or direct injection into the blood or muscle.

### Poison and Children

Accidental death from eating or drinking dangerous household substances happens mostly to children. Every year, 64% of all calls received by the RMPDC are associated with poisoning episodes in children 5 years-of-age and younger. The leading causes of poison episodes among Idaho children involve eating or drinking aspirin, medicine, diaper rash cream, toys, cosmetics and personal care products, and household and auto cleaning supplies. Most of these poison exposures occur in the child's own home.

### 2005 to 2007

4,744 patients went to a health care facility because of poison exposure. The RMPDC provided assistance to the health care facilities on each of these cases. The outcomes of those 4,744 poisonings are listed below.

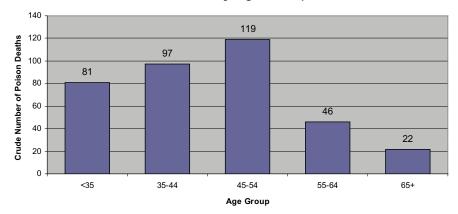
- 52.6% were treated and released
- 21.6% were admitted for hospitalization to a critical care unit
- 10.2% were admitted for hospitalization to a non-critical care unit
- 7.5% were admitted to a psychiatric unit
- 8.1% left against medical advice or refused treatment

### Poison and Adults

The number one cause of poisoning among Idahoans age 20 years and older is from ethanol - in the form of alcoholic beverages. The second leading cause is from taking sedatives.

Although rare, deaths have been reported in Idaho residents because the victim drank alcohol and took drugs. Other leading causes of poisoning among Idaho adults are eating or drinking things like aspirin, acetaminophen, drugs for the heart, and inhaling dangerous fumes or vapors. Idahoans 20 years and older make up about 24% of calls to the RMPDC.

# Crude Poison Deaths by Age Group, 2005-2007



\*One exception to the source of data used in this fact sheet is that provided in the section, Drug Deaths in Idaho. Data used in this section are provided by the Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics, Division of Health.