

Data Spotlight

Drug Abuse Warning Network

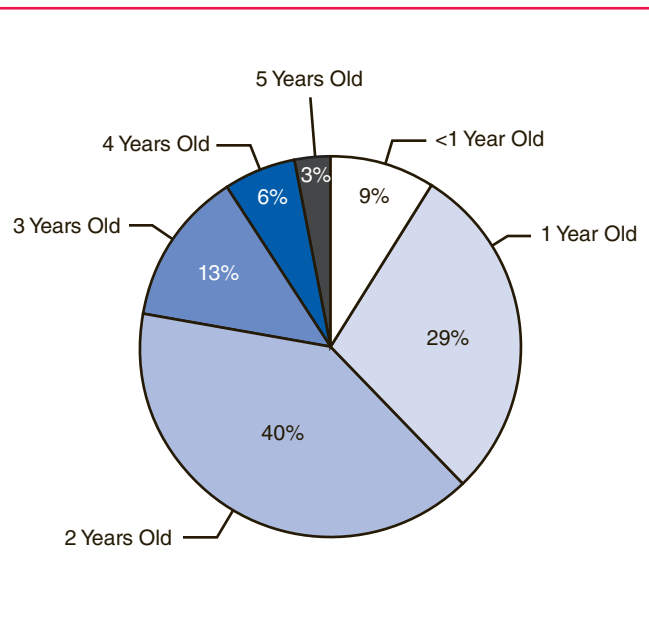
April 10, 2012

Emergency Department Visits for Accidental Medication Ingestion; Visits by 1 and 2 Year Olds Are Most Common

Medications can be extremely dangerous if they are accidentally consumed by children. According to the Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN), 61,825 emergency department (ED) visits in 2009 involved children aged 5 and younger who accidentally ingested pharmaceutical drugs.¹ About two thirds of these ED visits (69 percent, or 42,503 visits) involved children who were 1 or 2 years old (Figure). Many of these visits involved medications that are readily available over the counter and may be seen as safe for adults (Table). As infants become toddlers and move independently in their homes and child care settings, more objects become available to reach, touch, and explore. Caregivers should be aware that even very young children may be able to access medications stored on shelves, in cabinets, and in purses. For suggestions on safely storing medications, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/medicationstorage/>.

¹ Any accidental ingestion visits involving nonpharmaceuticals (i.e., alcohol, illicit drugs) have been excluded.

Age Distribution among Emergency Department (ED) Visits for Accidental Ingestion of Pharmaceuticals by Children Aged 5 and Younger: 2009



Drugs Involved in Emergency Department (ED) Visits for Accidental Ingestions of Pharmaceuticals by Children Aged 5 and Younger: 2009

Drug Category	Number of Visits	Percent of Visits
Total Visits	61,825	100
Central Nervous System (CNS) Medications	29,358	48
Pain Relievers	17,793	29
Acetaminophen Products	8,345	14
Narcotic Pain Relievers	4,754	8
Ibuprofen Products	3,133	5
Anti-anxiety and Insomnia Drugs	7,006	11
Benzodiazepines	3,629	6
Cardiovascular System Medications	9,100	15
Beta-adrenergic Blocking Agents	2,372	4
Psychotherapeutic Medications	5,195	8
Antidepressants	3,646	6
Respiratory System Medications	5,330	9
Antihistamines	1,009	2
Topical Agents	5,655	9
Nutritional Products	2,888	5
Gastrointestinal System Medications	2,261	4

Source: The Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) is a public health surveillance system that monitors drug-related hospital emergency department (ED) visits and drug-related deaths to track the impact of drug use, misuse, and abuse in the United States.

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