

## Emergency Medical Services and the Maryland Poison Center: Vital Public Services Working Together

Emergency Medical Services week is May 18-24. The Maryland Poison Center (MPC) would like to thank EMS providers for the dedicated services they provide. In 2007, the MPC received 1,438 calls from EMS providers in every Maryland county and Baltimore City. Poison centers are important information resources for EMS providers, working together in many ways to prevent injuries and save lives:

- MPC specialists are often directly connected to 911 callers, enabling the MPC Specialist to recommend immediate onsite treatment as well as assess whether the patient needs to be transported to the hospital.
- The MPC specialist provides assistance to EMS providers with the diagnosis and assessment of poisoned patients and offers information on appropriate prehospital treatment of patients.
- The MPC specialist notifies the hospital of the patient being transported, providing patient information as well as treatment recommendations to Emergency Department staff.
- The MPC is part of the Facility Resource Emergency Database (FRED), ensuring that we will be notified immediately of events that might require our assistance.
- Calling the MPC about every poisoned patient helps with national and local toxicosurveillance. Real-time collection and analysis of poison center data 24 hours/day helps to identify outbreaks, terrorism events and other public health events.
- The MPC specialist provides information on drug interactions and can even help EMS providers identify pills based on imprints.
- MPC staff work with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems as needed to update the Maryland Medical Protocols that relate to poisonings.
- EMS training at fire departments, conferences and colleges is provided by MPC staff.
- The MPC hosts EMS providers, students and other health professionals for onsite toxicology training.
- The MPC provides educational materials for EMS providers to distribute at schools, health fairs and open houses to help increase public awareness of poison prevention and the poison center.

### ***DID YOU KNOW THAT... in at least 287 cases involving calls to 911 in 2007, transportation by EMS was avoided based on Maryland Poison Center advice?***

Calling or connecting callers to the poison center avoids unnecessary transports and treatments, saving valuable EMS and health care resources that can be devoted to other patients. Studies show that every dollar spent on a poison center saves more than seven dollars in overall health care costs. This translates to a savings of \$15-30 million per year!



Post and share this edition of **tox<sup>t</sup>idbits** with your colleagues. Send any comments or questions to: **tox<sup>t</sup>idbits**, 410.706.7184 (fax) or [Lbooze@rx.umaryland.edu](mailto:Lbooze@rx.umaryland.edu).

If you do not wish to receive faxes or emails from the Maryland Poison Center, call 410.706.7604 or circle your fax number and fax this back to 410.706.7184. Supported by Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Read past issues of **ToxTidbits** at [www.mdpoison.com](http://www.mdpoison.com)