

# CALIFORNIA POISON CONTROL SYSTEM

# POISON SAFETY UPDATE

National Poison Prevention Week | March 2022, Issue 3

## CPCS Hotline Staff Spotlight

**What is your role at CPCS and how long have you been a poison expert?** I have been working for the California Poison Control System (CPCS) for 10 and a half years and I have been a Certified Specialist in Poison Information (CSPI) for eight and a half years. I answer poison exposure calls from the public, healthcare facilities (hospitals/clinics/urgent cares), nurse advice lines, and 911. I handle somewhere between 25 to 50 calls, which are a combination of new and follow-up cases, per day. During follow-up cases, I speak to doctors and nurses treating patients at a health care facility—this process helps CSPIs ensure that quality of care is given to Poison Hotline callers and increases CSPI knowledge to better assess and provide the best treatment advice during poison exposures. I also review cases completed by our poison control providers.

**Tell us about yourself:** Prior to becoming a CSPI, I had the opportunity to complete a drug information student rotation at the New Mexico Poison Center where I answered drug information calls and heard poison exposure calls for the first time. Now, I am an advisor to the Poison Prevention Committee of UCSD pharmacy students. As a preceptor, I work closely with these students and provide them with guidance during poison related presentations given to school, senior centers, and health fairs. I also meet with them in two-hour blocks where they visit the poison center and see what I do.



**“I find reward in reassuring people, especially when they’re in a stressful situation.”** —Mariam

Mariam is a CSPI, possesses a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of New Mexico, and completed year-long residencies in Pharmacy Practice and Nephrology at the San Diego VA Healthcare System.

## National Poison Prevention Week Programs and Materials

Celebrate NPPW 2022 by learning more about poison safety. Access free resources, materials, and programs to help minimize poisonings in your community. Visit [calpoison.org/health-education/poison-prevention-resources](http://calpoison.org/health-education/poison-prevention-resources)



## CPCS Poison Hotline

**“The person I spoke with was great. I was planning on going to the ER but after talking to her and following her advice I did not have to go to the hospital and what a relief... Thank you.”**

—CPCS Caller

The Poison Hotline not only saves lives, but saves millions of dollars in unnecessary medical bills for Californians. Many of the calls made to the Poison Hotline, **1-800-222-1222**, are managed outside of a health care facility. This means callers get the help they need from our team of poison experts, at the location of their call, free of charge.

## Guess the Poison!

**HINT #1** Green and glossy in the spring and crimson red in the fall, I usually grow in groups of three. From grassy hillsides, forests, and to coastal locations—I am found all year round. My oily self can give you an itchy rash that will last about a week or more. It's best not to touch me!



**HINT #2** To avoid me, wear a long-sleeved top, long pants, gloves, and closed-toe shoes or boots when hiking. Stay on trails and away

from bushes. Wash your clothes, tools, and pets after hiking outdoors.

**HINT #3** Don't panic, don't scratch. Wash itchy and affected areas with lukewarm water ASAP. Apply rubbing alcohol to wash away the oil and apply over the counter steroid cream to treat dermatitis and calamine lotion to help stop the itching.

**WHAT AM I?**

**ANSWER:** Poison Oak

## Explore Our StoryMap

Interested in learning more about poison and how common poisoning is in your County? Explore our **NEW CPCS StoryMap, “Let's Talk Poison”** today! An interactive tool illustrating poison exposure rates in California and ways to be poison safe. Share with your family and friends, so they can learn too!

## CPCS Resources



Scan the QR code with your phone or visit [flow.page/calpoison](http://flow.page/calpoison) for a variety of free CPCS resources.

Text TIPS to 20121 for weekly poison information in English and PUNTOS for Spanish.



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