

! WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

According to the Florida Department of Health, 516 Floridians died from **suicide** by poison in 2012. Poisoning is the third most common method of suicide, after gun use and hanging. Every day, Florida Poison Control Centers receive calls about people who have tried to harm themselves with poison. Some of these calls are placed by individuals, and others come from hospitals or paramedics. Young adults attempt suicide most often, but older adults are at a higher risk of actually dying by suicide.

Each year, the Department of Health also notes a number of **homicides** from poisoning. In 2012, there were 7 murders using poison, which represented 0.06% of all murders in the state.



? HOW DOES IT HAPPEN?

Most deaths seen by poison centers involve people who have taken a deadly dose of medicine on purpose. Most people who attempt suicide are clinically depressed and may give warning signs such as talking about suicide, feeling hopeless, or losing the will to live. Other signs include talking about being a burden to others, or increased drug or alcohol use.

Any attempt to hurt one's self is an emergency — even if the substance taken wasn't deadly. Anyone who feels the desire to inflict self-harm (or who has acted on that desire) should get help right away. People who try to hurt themselves once will often try again.

✓ PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Remove old or unneeded medicines and chemicals from the home. Safely dispose of these products as per your local authorities. Most old medicine may be mixed into your trash after being spoiled with water or cat litter.
- Make sure all needed medicines are secured and are given by a responsible caregiver.
- Get help for anyone who seems depressed. Signs of depression vary with age, so be sure to consult a doctor about symptoms and treatment options.
- Contact local police if you suspect someone is trying to poison you or someone else. A law enforcement official will consult with poison center experts if there is evidence of poisoning.

🔍 RESOURCES

- National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-TALK or online at <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- Florida Statewide Office of Suicide Prevention www.helppromotehope.com
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center www.sprc.org
- Drug disposal guidelines: US Food and Drug Administration 1-888-INFO-FDA (1-888-463-6332) or <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm101653.htm>

For any poisoning or medicine mistake, call your poison control center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

Calls are answered by doctors, nurses and pharmacists, and are quick, free and confidential. www.floridapoisontcontrol.org