

# CALIFORNIA POISON CONTROL SYSTEM POISON SAFETY UPDATE

Winter Safety | December 2022, Issue 6

## Winter Safety

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas produced from burning fuel. CO poisoning can be deadly and occurs when you accidentally breathe in the gas. Visit [calpoison.org/about-carbon-monoxide-poisoning](https://calpoison.org/about-carbon-monoxide-poisoning) and learn how to identify and prevent CO poisoning.



## CPCS Poison Hotline

**“Extremely helpful in keeping me calm and helped me through the situation.”** —CPCS Caller

### How can the Poison Hotline help you?

- When you dial **1-800-222-1222**, a poison expert will answer your phone call immediately.
- Staff who answer the phone are pharmacists, nurses, doctors, and Specialists in Poison Information (SPIs). Learn more about our experts at [calpoison.org/about](https://calpoison.org/about).
- The Hotline is available 24/7, free of charge, with translation services in over 200 languages.
- Your personal information is never shared with anyone.

## CPCS Hotline Staff Spotlight

**“I love the fact that we can provide reliable and rapid information to parents and clinicians so they can make the best decision for their patients or loved ones.”** —Dr. Rais Vohra

### What is your role at CPCS and how long have you been a poison expert?

I have been working for CPCS for 12 years. As a CPCS Medical Director, I support activities within my poison control division, which includes formulating evidence-based and reliable recommendations on all the cases called to our poison control center. I am proud to be a partner with those in the front lines of clinical medicine, working with hospitals and community providers, and also providing lectures to the general public and medical community on how to keep people safe from poisons, chemical hazards, and animal venoms.

As a Medical Director of our poison control center, my duties include helping provide quality information to our staff who provide recommendations on our Poison Hotline. Medical Directors lead educational activities and quality improvement measures, as well as research, lectures, mentoring, and development of protocols used by the pharmacists and staff of the poison control center.



Dr. Rais Vohra is a Medical Director of the California Poison Control System, an emergency medicine physician, and the Interim Public Health Officer in Fresno County.

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## CPCS Hotline Staff Spotlight *continued*

I am involved in professional education for rotating students, residents, and fellows who are learning how to take care of poisoned patients. In addition, I work with the CPCS Health Education Program, which provides outreach and education for the public and our partnering agencies throughout the state of California.

I am also an ER doctor. When I am working shifts in the emergency department, I serve as the attending faculty physician who oversees medical students, interns, and medical residents about acute care medicine in an academic emergency department. One role I am especially fulfilled by is my work with substance use disorder, which includes training clinicians and the general public on naloxone for opioid overdose. I am involved in leading our hospital's program for starting patients on addiction recovery medications, and finding treatment options in the community. This is one of the many ways that poison centers support the statewide response to the substance use disorder epidemic that's affecting teenagers and families. I am also a public health official, which allows me to advise communities and policy makers about important trends and best practices in poison prevention.

In all of these roles, I love learning and teaching about cutting-edge advances in toxicology and new ways to keep people safe from poisonings, including tackling unsafe social media challenges that are exposing people to poisoning. I get excited thinking about advances in technology and providing care through telehealth, a structure that CPCS has been offering for decades.

### Tell us about yourself:

I have many diverse interests and love being able to combine toxicology with medical education, emergency medicine, and public health. Throughout my career, I've had the opportunity to travel to Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India and received training on unusual poisoning exposure—these experiences have taught me a lot.

Finally, I am a proud dad of two girls. In my spare time, I love hanging out with kids and riding my bike. I appreciate the great weather where I live here in Central California, which allows me to explore the great outdoors year-round.

## Guess the Poison!



**HINT #1** This plant is popular during the winter holidays for its symbol of love and good luck. The plant has yellowish flowers, yellowish-green leaves, and white berries.

**HINT #2** All parts of this plant are poisonous and can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain if eaten. Keep them out of reach of children and pets.

**HINT #3** View the 7th plant in the table at [calpoison.org/holiday-plant-safety](https://calpoison.org/holiday-plant-safety)

**WHAT AM I?**

**ANSWER: Mistletoe**

## CPCS Resources

Visit [calpoison.org/holiday-hazards](https://calpoison.org/holiday-hazards) for winter safety tips. And find free resources at [flowcode.com/page/calpoison](https://flowcode.com/page/calpoison).



## Make a Gift

Enjoying our free CPCS services and resources? **Make a gift today** to help keep Californians poison-safe. Happy Holidays!



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