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## **National Poison Data System Shows Decline in Accidental Acetaminophen Overdoses**

*Know Your Dose campaign targets the 50 million Americans who use acetaminophen weekly*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the [Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition](#) (AAC) highlights research showing that progress is being made to increase awareness of the safe use of acetaminophen—one of the most common drug ingredients in the U.S. The group says [data](#) collected from the National Poison Data System and released in late 2015 show a steady decline in unintentional exposures of acetaminophen, including dosing errors and accidental misuse, since a peak in 2009.

The AAC founded the [Know Your Dose](#) campaign in 2011 to educate consumers about acetaminophen safe use. Acetaminophen is used by 50 million Americans every week to treat a variety of symptoms, from back and knee pain to cold and flu symptoms and headaches. Found in more than 600 over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medicines, it is safe and effective when used as directed, but there is a limit to how much you can take in one day. Taking more acetaminophen than directed is an overdose and can lead to liver damage.

“As a member of the AAC, it is encouraging and gratifying to see these results, but we know more work is needed to help ensure people take their medicines safely,” said Colleen Creighton, Director of the Consumer Healthcare Products Association (CHPA) Educational Foundation, a founding member of the coalition. “While consumer knowledge is increasing and poison center calls are going down, there are still thousands of calls being made every year regarding unintentional acetaminophen overdose. Our coalition remains committed to working together to educate consumers.”

For the past five years, Know Your Dose has raised awareness of acetaminophen as a drug ingredient, armed healthcare providers with free educational materials for their patients, and encouraged consumers to follow four key safe use steps:

1. Always read and follow the label.
2. Know if your medicines contain acetaminophen.
3. Take only one medicine at a time that contains acetaminophen.
4. Ask your healthcare provider if you have questions about dosing instructions or medicines that contain acetaminophen.

Creighton noted that, according to a nationwide [survey](#) of 1,000 U.S. adult pain medicine users conducted by CHPA, consumer knowledge about how to use acetaminophen safely and awareness of its risks are at record highs. The survey shows that the number of consumers who understand that exceeding the recommended daily dose of acetaminophen may lead to liver damage has increased from 78 percent in 2010 to 87 percent in 2013, and the number of consumers who think it is important to check the medicine label for the maximum daily dose increased from 93 percent in 2010 to 98 percent in 2013.

The upward trend in consumer awareness and the downward trend in unintentional overdose are positive signs that educational efforts on the parts of numerous stakeholders—healthcare providers, patient organizations, manufacturers, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—are contributing to better understanding and safer use of acetaminophen.

“The educational efforts of the last five years are having an impact, and it’s exciting to see the results of a shared mission across many groups,” said John Whyte, M.D., M.P.H., director of FDA’s Professional Affairs and

Stakeholder Engagement in its Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. “Acetaminophen is widely used and it’s extremely important that we educate patients and consumers about how to take it safely.”

For more information and resources including free materials for healthcare provider offices, visit [KnowYourDose.org](http://KnowYourDose.org) and follow [@KnowYourDose](https://twitter.com/KnowYourDose) on Twitter.

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Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition members include the Alliance for Aging Research, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American Pharmacists Association, Caregiver Action Network, CHPA Educational Foundation, National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation, National Community Pharmacists Association, National Consumers League, and National Council on Patient Information and Education. Advisors to the Coalition include the American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and U.S. Food and Drug Administration.