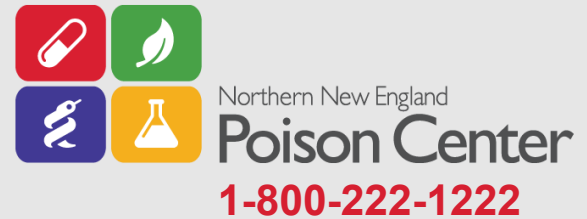


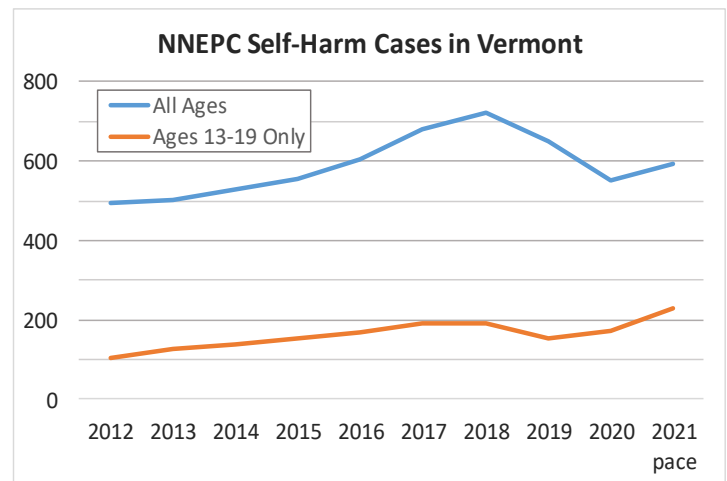
Self-Harm Poisonings

Snapshot of a Growing Problem in Vermont



Scope of the Problem

- **Self-harm poisonings are a significant cause of injury in Vermont**, accounting for 53% of the nearly 1,100 hospital visits for intentional self-harm in the state in 2018.
- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, **incidences of self-harm poisonings had been steadily increasing for years**, with NNEPC cases reaching a high of 721 in 2018. Increasing attempts among young people have been largely responsible for the overall trend.
- While the total number of self-harm cases fell significantly during the pandemic, the number of **cases involving young patients began to rise rapidly in the fall of 2020**. In 2021, the number of cases involving patients 13 to 19 years old from January through October had already equaled the previous annual high.
- Most self-harm poisonings involve female patients. Girls accounted for 75% of teenage patients in 2021 as of October, while across all age groups, 68% of patients were female.
- Research suggests that the first episode of deliberate poisoning is a **strong predictor of subsequent suicide** and premature death.



What Can We Do?

- Screen all patients for risk of self-harm. If a patient is at risk, discuss their intent.
- Analyze prescribing habits. Consider the potential for harm from a large dose of the patient's prescribed medications.
- Communicate the importance of medication safety to patients and families.
- Discuss medications of concern with parents and offer safety planning with a focus on safe storage and disposal of medications.