

# Maine Supplement

## Statistics

Patients 13-19 years have consistently comprised the most common age bracket among self-harm poisonings managed by the Northern New England Poison Center.

While the total number of self-harm poisonings managed by the NNEPC in Maine has fallen since 2012, with a particular decline since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of cases involving teenagers had maintained a general upward trend over the past decade before seeing a significant, concerning increase starting in the fall of 2020 (Figure 1). This is further confirmed by hospital emergency department data concerning intentional self-poisonings (Figure 2).

As in Vermont, while self-poisoning is a significant mechanism of self-harm, it rarely leads to death among patients in these age groups. Because self-poisoning is more likely to be survived than other mechanisms of suicide attempt, there is an opportunity for intervention to prevent future attempts, potentially with worse outcomes.

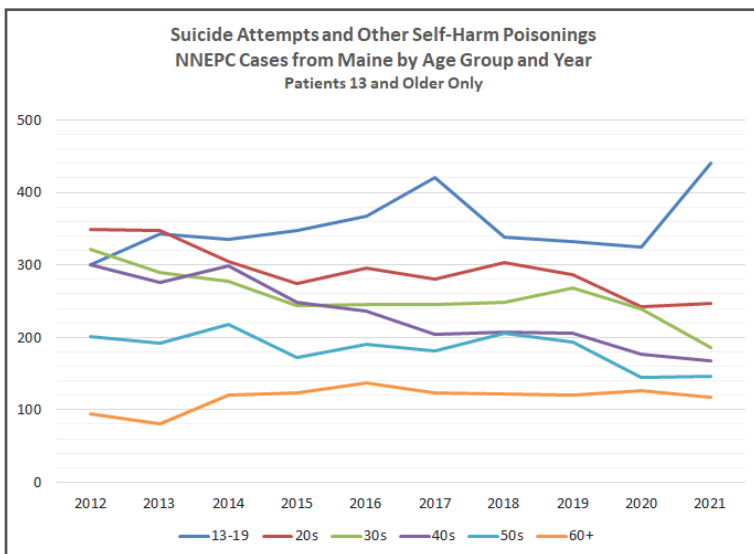


Figure 1

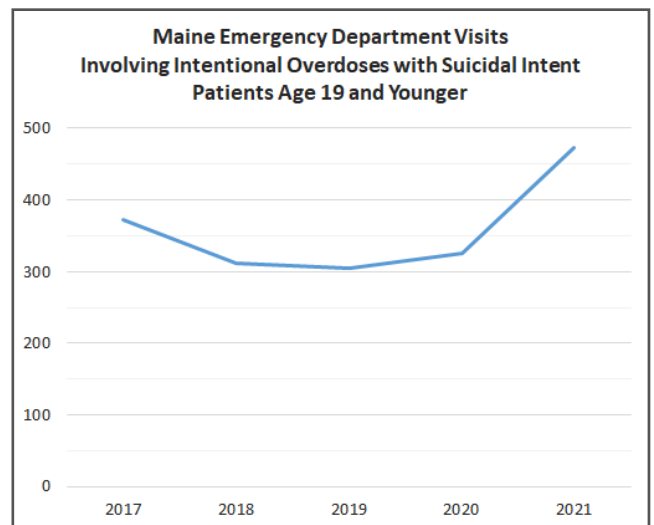


Figure 2

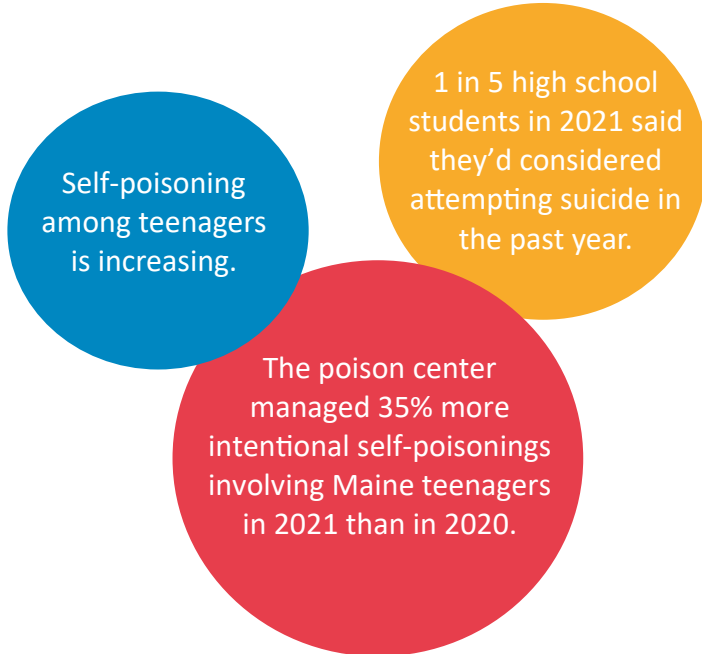
## Resources for Providers and Patients

- **Office of Child and Family Services:** OCFS, within the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, oversees systems of care for mental health and facilitates the provision of services. [maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs](http://maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs)
- **Maine Suicide Prevention Program:** MSPP, within the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, collaborates with state and local partners to provide resources, technical assistance and training for professionals and community members. [maine.gov/suicide](http://maine.gov/suicide)
- **NAMI Maine:** Part of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, NAMI Maine provides support services for people affected by mental illness and contributes to advocacy, education and awareness raising. [namimaine.org](http://namimaine.org)

# Youth Self-Poisoning



## In Maine...



### Common self-poisoning substances include:

- Over-the-counter pain relievers
- Antidepressants
- Antihistamines
- ADHD medications
- Anti-anxiety medications

### Dangers from self-poisoning include:

- Stomach upset, diarrhea, vomiting
- Hallucinations
- Agitation
- Extreme drowsiness
- Heart issues
- Liver failure
- Seizures
- Death

## What can you do?

- **Take your child's threats of suicide or self-harm seriously.** Never dismiss them as "typical teenage behavior." Impulsive self-poisoning attempts can occur with no history of mental illness.
- Store all medications, including over-the-counter products and prescriptions, behind a lock, such as in a lock box or cabinet.
- Properly dispose of unused medications at a police station, pharmacy or take-back event.
- Monitor your child's medications at home, including prescriptions and over-the-counter products.
- Avoid buying medications in bulk to limit the risk of overdosing.
- Ask the parents of friends how and where they store their medications, marijuana, and alcohol.
- **Go to the emergency department immediately after a self-poisoning attempt.** Don't wait for medical treatment, even if your child looks fine.

## Emergency Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: call 988 or 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis Text Line: Text "HOME" to 741741
- Northern New England Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222; text "POISON" to 85511; chat at [nnepc.org](http://nnepc.org)
- The Trevor Project for LGBTQ+ youth under 25 in crisis: 1-866-488-7386; text "START" to 678678; chat at [TheTrevorProject.org](http://TheTrevorProject.org)
- Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860

# Mental Health, Self-Harm, and Your Teen

## Youth Self-Harm and Suicide

Self-poisoning in teenagers is increasing in Maine. You have an important role to play in protecting and supporting your teen and their mental health.

You may not feel prepared to recognize the warning signs for self-harm and suicide, or to know how to offer your teen the support they need, whether they are having a rough day or struggling with their mental health. Fortunately, there are many resources to help you be there for them.

- Maine Office of Child and Family Services oversees mental health care systems: [maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs](http://maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs)
- Maine 211 can connect you to mental health services in your area: [211maine.org](http://211maine.org)
- Maine Suicide Prevention Program can provide prevention resources: [maine.gov/suicide](http://maine.gov/suicide)

## How to Help

- **Ask** directly if they are thinking about hurting or killing themselves. Listen without judgement.
- **Keep them safe** by limiting their access to lethal means, such as medications, poisons, or firearms.
- **Be there** and be present for them. Let them know that you love and care about them.
- **Connect to support** for yourself and for them. You can use the resources listed on this document.
- **Follow up** with them regularly to see how they are doing

Learn more about these steps and how to #BeThe1To at [bethe1to.com](http://bethe1to.com).

## Warning Signs

- When they talk, listen:
  - Feeling hopeless
  - Feeling trapped
  - Feeling like a burden
  - Not having a reason to live
- Watch for changes in behavior:
  - Withdrawing from people
  - Withdrawing from activities
  - Sleeping a lot more or a lot less
  - Acting aggressively
- Recognize changes in mood:
  - Depressed
  - Anxious
  - Irritable
  - Humiliated
  - Ashamed
  - Agitated

## Crisis Resources

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 or 1-800-273-8255
- Crisis Text Line: Text “HOME” to 741741
- SAMHSA’s National Helpline: 1-800-662-4357
- Northern New England Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222 or text “POISON” to 85511
- The Trevor Project: 1-866-488-7386, text “START” to 678678, or chat online at [TheTrevorProject.org](http://TheTrevorProject.org)
- Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860
- LGBT National Help Center: 1-888-843-4564

## For LGBTQ+ Youth

