



# News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CDPH Urges Caution When Collecting and Eating Wild Mushrooms**

**SACRAMENTO** - As seasonal rains promote the growth of wild mushrooms, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith is again reminding people that eating wild mushrooms can cause serious illness and even death.



"Telling the difference between wild mushrooms that are safe and those that are poisonous can be difficult for many people," said Dr. Smith. "Wild mushrooms should not be eaten unless they have been examined by a mushroom expert and determined to be edible."



The most serious illnesses and deaths have been linked primarily to wild mushrooms known to cause liver damage, including *Amanita phalloides* (shown above left), also known as the "death cap" and *Amanita ocreata* (shown below at left), or "destroying angel." A bloom of *Amanita phalloides* last winter resulted in 14 mushroom poisonings in California that required hospitalization. Three of these cases required a liver transplant.

According to the California Poison Control System (CPCS), 1,038 cases of poisonous mushroom ingestion were reported throughout the state from November 2016 to January 15, 2018. Among those cases:

- 16 suffered a major health outcome, such as liver failure leading to coma and/or a liver transplant, or kidney failure requiring dialysis.
- 51 suffered a moderate health outcome, such as dehydration due to vomiting and diarrhea, or injury to the liver or kidney.
- 433 were children younger than six years of age. Usually, the children ate a small amount of a mushroom growing in yards or neighborhood parks.

- 522 were treated at a health care facility.
- 16 were admitted to an intensive care unit.

Eating poisonous mushrooms can cause abdominal pain, cramping, vomiting, diarrhea, liver damage or death. Anyone who develops symptoms after eating wild mushrooms should seek immediate medical attention. People who develop these symptoms, or their treating health care providers, should immediately contact CPCS at (800) 222-1222.

*Photos courtesy of Trent Pearce, Tilden Nature Area*

*Download the audio clip from Dr. Rick Kreutzer, Chief of the Division of Environmental and Occupational Disease Control.*

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