



# List of poisonings

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This is a **list of poisonings**, both deliberate and accidental, in chronological order by the date of death of the victim(s). It also includes mass poisonings, confirmed attempted poisonings, and fictional poisonings, as well as a list of poisoners who are known or suspected to have poisoned multiple people. Many of the people listed here committed or attempted to commit **suicide** by poison.

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## Non-fiction [ edit ]

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### Fatal poisonings [ edit ]

- [Socrates](#) (d. 399 BC), Greek philosopher; according to [Plato](#), he was sentenced to kill himself by drinking [poison hemlock](#)
- [Artaxerxes III](#) (d. 338 BC), Persian king; possibly poisoned by his vizier [Bagoas](#)
- [Artaxerxes IV](#) (d. 336 BC), Persian king; poisoned by his vizier [Bagoas](#)
- [Bagoas](#) (d. 336 BC), Persian vizier and king-maker; poisoned by [Darius III](#)
- [Demosthenes](#) (d. 322 BC), Athenian [politician](#)
- [Durdhara](#) (d. 320 BC), [Chandragupta Maurya](#)'s queen; accidentally poisoned when she ate poisoned food meant for the emperor, who was immune
- [Aratus of Sicyon](#) (d. 213 BC), leader of [Sicyon](#) and the [Achaean League](#)
- [Antipater the Idumaeon](#) (d. 43 BC), father of [Herod the Great](#)
- [Julius Caesar Drusus](#) (d. 23), son of [Tiberius](#)
- [Emperor Hui of Jin China](#) (d. 304)
- [Ali ibn Abi Talib](#) (d. 661), fourth caliph of the [Rashidun Caliphate](#) and first of the [Twelve Imams of Shia Islam](#)
- [Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz](#) (d. 720), eighth caliph of the [Umayyad Caliphate](#)
- [Muhammad al-Baqir](#) (d. 733), fifth [Imam of Twelver Shia Islam](#); supposedly died after being given a poisoned saddle
- [Mūsá al-Kāẓim](#) (d. 799), seventh [Imam of Twelver Shia Islam](#)
- [Muhammad al-Jawad](#) (d. 835), ninth [Imam of Twelver Shia Islam](#); supposedly poisoned by his wife on orders from the new caliph
- [Romanus II](#) (d. 963), [Byzantine emperor](#) of the [Macedonian dynasty](#)
- [Alan III, Duke of Brittany](#) (d. 1040)
- [Constantine II of Armenia](#) (d. 1129)
- [Alphonse I, Count of Toulouse](#) (d. 1148)
- [Baldwin III of Jerusalem](#) (d. 1162)
- [Blanche of Bourbon](#) (d. 1361), first wife of King [Pedro of Castile](#)
- [Louis, Count of Gravina](#) (d. 1362)
- [Robert, Count of Eu](#) (d. 1387)
- [Ladislaus, King of Naples](#) (d. 1414)
- [Dmitry Shemyaka](#) (d. 1453), Grand Duke of Moscow; poisoned with [arsenic](#) by [Vasily Tyomniy](#)'s agents in [Great Novgorod](#)

- Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494)
- Margaret Drummond (d. 1502), mistress of King James IV of Scotland
- Timoji (d. 1512), Hindu privateer and Portuguese ally
- Juan Ponce de León (d. 1521), Spanish conquistador; died after being wounded by a poisoned arrow
- Mikhail Skopin-Shuisky (d. 1610), Russian general and statesman
- Yamada Nagamasa (d. 1630), Japanese adventurer
- Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor (d. 1740), ate poisonous mushrooms
- Johann Schobert (d. 1767), German composer; ate poisonous mushrooms believing them to be edible
- Bradford sweets poisoning (1858); 21 people died and more than 200 others became ill when confections accidentally made with arsenic trioxide were sold from a market stall in Bradford, England
- Olive Thomas (d. 1920), American silent film actress; accidentally ingested a large dose of mercury(II) chloride
- Madge Oberholtzer (d. 1925), rape victim of Ku Klux Klan leader D.C. Stephenson; died after attempting to commit suicide with mercury(II) chloride
- Nestor Lakoba (d. 1936), Abkhaz Communist leader; poisoned by NKVD chief Lavrenti Beria
- Abram Slutsky (d.1938), head of Soviet spy service; poisoned with hydrogen cyanide by NKVD
- Nikolai Koltsov (d. 1940), Russian biologist; poisoned by NKVD secret police
- Erwin Rommel (d. 1944), German general; opted to commit suicide with cyanide after facing trial for his involvement in the 20 July plot
- Eva Hitler (née Braun) (d. 1945), wife of Adolf Hitler; committed suicide by cyanide capsule at Hitler's side
- The six Goebbels children (d. 1945); poisoned by their parents Magda and Joseph Goebbels, who then killed themselves by poison and gunshots shortly afterwards
- Heinrich Himmler (d. 1945), leader of the Nazi Schutzstaffel (SS); suicide by cyanide capsule after being captured
- Odilo Globocnik (d. 1945)
- Hermann Göring (d. 1946), leader of the Nazi Luftwaffe; suicide by cyanide capsule, long after being captured and only hours before his sentenced hanging was to take place
- Theodore Romzha (d. 1947), bishop of the Ruthenian Greek Catholic Church; poisoned by NKVD agents, who injected him with curare on orders from Nikita Khrushchev

- Alan Turing (d. 1954), British mathematician; apparently committed suicide by injecting an apple with cyanide and taking a bite, though it has also been speculated that the poisoning was accidental
- Stepan Bandera (d. 1959); poisoned by a cyanide capsule shot from a gun by KGB agents
- 1971 Iraq poison grain disaster; at least 650 people died after eating methylmercury-treated grain intended for seeding
- Bandō Mitsugorō VIII (d. 1975), Japanese kabuki actor; ate four livers of fugu fish
- Jayanta Hazarika (d. 1977), Assamese singer and musician
- Georgi Markov (d. 1978), Bulgarian dissident; assassinated in London with ricin
- Peoples Temple members (1978); over 900 died by cyanide-laced punch at Jonestown
- Love Canal (up to 1978); buried toxic waste was covered and used as a building site for housing and a school in Niagara Falls, New York, resulting in claims of chronic poisoning that led to a massive environmental cleanup
- Bhopal disaster (1984); accidental release of poisonous gas from a pesticide plant in India that killed over 10,000 people and injured many more
- Matsumoto incident (1994); Sarin gas attack carried out by members of the Aum Shinrikyo group killed 7 people and injured approximately 200
- Sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway (1995); attack carried out by members of the Aum Shinrikyo group killed 12 and injured 1,034
- Marshall Applewhite (d. 1997)
- Moscow theater hostage crisis (2002); to end the crisis, the Federal Security Service (FSB) pumped an undisclosed chemical agent into the building's ventilation system, killing 40 militants and 133 hostages
- Ibn al-Khattab (d. 2002), Sunni jihadi fighter; died from a poisoned letter sent by Russian FSB agency
- Roman Tsepov (d. 2004), Russian businessman; poisoned by unspecified radioactive material
- Alexander Litvinenko (d. 2006), Russian ex-spy and investigator; died three weeks after being poisoned by radioactive polonium-210
- Zamfara State lead poisoning epidemic (2010); at least 163 people died in Zamfara State, Nigeria
- Murder of Garnett Spears (2014), a boy in New York whose mother suffered from Munchausen syndrome by proxy, eventually leading her to give her son a fatal amount of table salt

- [Slobodan Praljak](#) (d. 2017), former Bosnian Croat retired general in the Croatian Army and the Croatian Defence Council; upon hearing of the guilty verdict upheld in his trial for war crimes, he drank poison in the courtroom and died a few hours later

## Non-fatal poisonings [ edit ]

- [Grigori Rasputin](#), Russian mystic; survived being poisoned with [potassium cyanide](#), as well as being shot, bludgeoned, and being thrown into a frozen river before he finally died by [drowning](#)
- [Clare Boothe Luce](#), fell ill from [arsenic](#) poisoning in 1956 but did not die
- [Nikolay Khokhlov](#), poisoned by radioactive [thallium](#) in Germany in 1957 for refusing to work as a KGB assassin
- [Alexander Dubček](#), Slovak politician; survived an attempt to poison him with [strontium-90](#) in 1968
- [Hafizullah Amin](#), second President of [Afghanistan](#); survived a poisoning by a Soviet agent in 1979
- [Zhu Ling](#), Chinese university student poisoned with [thallium](#) in 1995
- [Khaled Mashal](#), leader of Palestinian fundamentalist organization [Hamás](#); survived being poisoned by Israeli assassins in 1997 after two of the assassins were captured and an [antidote](#) was supplied by Israel in exchange for their release
- [Anna Politkovskaya](#), Russian journalist; poisoned during a flight to [Beslan](#) in 2004
- [Viktor Yushchenko](#), Ukrainian politician; poisoned with [dioxin](#) during the [2004 Ukrainian electoral campaign](#)
- [Viktor Kalashnikov](#), Russian ex-KGB colonel; both he and his wife survived being poisoned with [mercury](#) in 2010

## Alleged poisonings [ edit ]

- [Alexander the Great](#) (d. 323 BC)
- [Mithridates VI of Pontus](#) (d. 63 BC), king of [Pontus](#) and [Armenia Minor](#)
- [Ptolemy XIV of Egypt](#) (d. 44 BC); if so, by his sister [Cleopatra](#)
- [Augustus](#) (d. 14), Roman Emperor, with poisoned figs by his wife [Livia](#)
- [Germanicus](#) (d. 19), Roman general
- [Claudius](#) (d. 54), Roman Emperor, by his wife [Agrippina the Younger](#)
- [Boudica](#) (d. 60 or 61), Queen of the Iceni tribe and leader of the rebellion against Roman rule in Britain; committed suicide by poison according to [Tacitus](#), though [Dio Cassius](#) claimed natural illness
- [Constance of Normandy](#) (d. 1090), daughter of King [William I of England](#)

- King John of England (d. 1216); with peaches
- Pope Benedict XI (d. 1304)
- Stefan Dusan (d. 1355), Serbian king
- Barbara Radziwiłł (d. 1551), Queen of Poland
- King Eric XIV of Sweden (d. 1577); according to folklore, he was killed from poisoning by arsenic hidden in pea soup
- Tycho Brahe (d. 1601), Danish astronomer
- Jamestown colonists (1607–1610); standard historical accounts suggest many early colonists died of starvation, but the possibility of arsenic poisoning by rat poison (or of death by bubonic plague) has also been reported<sup>[1]</sup>
- Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury (d. 1612)
- Victor Amadeus I, Duke of Savoy (d. 1637)
- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (d. 1791), Austrian composer; with antimony
- Napoleon Bonaparte (d. 1821); some claim he was killed with arsenic by someone on his staff, though the evidence is inconclusive
- Pope Pius VIII (d. 1830)
- Zachary Taylor (d. 1850), 12th President of the United States; theorized by author Clara Rising that his milk was poisoned during an Independence Day celebration
- John Gallagher Montgomery (d. 1857), U.S. Congressman from Pennsylvania
- Charles Darwin (d. 1882), English naturalist; possibly died due to self-medication with Fowler's solution, one-percent potassium arsenite
- Hanoi Poison Plot (1908), a group of local Vietnamese tried to poison the entire French colonial army's garrison in the Citadel of Hanoi
- Huo Yuanjia (d. 1910), wushu master and Chinese national hero; arsenic
- Emperor Gojong of Korea (d. 1919); allegedly poisoned by the Japanese
- Maxim Gorky (d. 1936), Russian writer; NKVD chief Genrikh Yagoda admitted at the Trial of the Twenty One that he ordered to poison Gorky and his son
- Robert Johnson (d. 1938), American musician
- Raoul Wallenberg (d. c. 1947), Swedish humanitarian who saved tens of thousands of Jews during World War II; reportedly poisoned in Lubyanka prison by Grigory Mairanovsky
- Joseph Stalin (d. 1953); officially cerebral hemorrhage, but according to Vyacheslav Molotov's memoirs and historians Radzinsky and Antonov-Ovseenko, Stalin was poisoned on Lavrenty Beria's orders
- Vasili Blokhin (d. 1955), former executioner of NKVD

- Lal Bahadur Shastri (d. 1966), second Prime Minister of India
- João Goulart (d. 1976), former Brazilian president ousted by 1964 coup d'état
- Carlos Lacerda (d. 1977), Brazilian journalist and presidential nominee
- Pope John Paul I (d. 1978)
- Gulf War syndrome, a chronic multi-symptom disorder afflicting more than 250,000 returning veterans and civilian workers of the Gulf War of 1990–1991; while the etiology of the condition continues to be debated, various manmade poisons have been suggested as possible causes
- Yuri Shchekochikhin (d. 2003), Russian investigative journalist; died presumably from poisoning by radioactive thallium
- Yasser Arafat (d. 2004); reputedly died from liver cirrhosis, which may be a consequence of chronic alcohol use or poisoning. Some Arafat supporters feel it is unlikely that Arafat habitually used alcohol (forbidden by Islam), and so suspect poisoning. However, it is also important to note that cirrhosis is not necessarily caused by alcohol use, or indeed any poison at all.
- Ardeshir Hosseinpour (d. 2007), Iranian nuclear scientist; possibly assassinated by Mossad with "radioactive poisoning" or "gas poisoning"<sup>[2][3][4]</sup>

## Poisoners [edit]

- Locusta, professional poisoner hired by Roman emperor Nero and his mother Agrippina the Younger for several murders
- Lucrezia Borgia (d. 1519), alleged by rivals of the Borgia family to be a poisoner, using a hollow ring to poison drinks with white arsenic
- Edward Squire (d. 1598), English scrivener and sailor executed for conspiring to poison Queen Elizabeth I and Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex
- George Chapman, hanged after murdering three common-law wives
- Mary Ann Cotton, 19th-century woman who poisoned family members for financial gain
- Maria Swanenburg, Dutch serial killer who murdered at least 27 and was suspected of killing more than 90 people
- Thomas Neill Cream (d. 1892), British serial killer
- Vera Renczi, Romanian serial killer who used arsenic to kill two husbands, a son, and 32 suitors
- Nannie Doss, black widow
- Anna Marie Hahn (d. 1938), American serial killer



- Dr. [John Bodkin Adams](#), British doctor acquitted in 1957 but suspected of killing 163 patients via [morphia](#) and [barbiturates](#).<sup>[5]</sup>
- [Genevieve Jones](#), homicidal nurse
- [Grigory Mairanovsky](#), received Soviet PhD degree for testing poisons on [political prisoners](#)
- [Stella Nickell](#), used cyanide-laced Excedrin to kill her husband and another woman in suburban Seattle in 1986
- [Charles Sobhraj](#), serial killer who preyed on Western tourists throughout Southeast Asia during the 1970s
- [Michael Swango](#), American physician and surgeon who fatally poisoned at least thirty of his patients and colleagues
- [Graham Frederick Young](#) (d. 1990), British serial killer
- Members of the [Aum Shinrikyo](#) religious group in Japan in the 1990s often used poisons for murder, including chemical weapons such as [VX](#) and [Sarin](#)
- [Daisuke Mori](#), Japanese nurse convicted of one murder and four attempted murders by [muscle relaxant](#)
- [Harold Shipman](#) (d. 2004), English general practitioner and one of the most prolific known serial killers in modern history
- [Richard Kuklinski](#) (d. 2006), American [contract killer](#) who was associated with the [Gambino crime family](#)

## Fiction [ edit ]

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As poisoning is a long-established plot device in *crime fiction*, this is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

### Novels [ edit ]

#### Crime fiction [ edit ]

- Anthony Berkeley: *The Poisoned Chocolates Case*
- Ann Granger: *Say It With Poison*
- Francis Iles: *Before the Fact* (filmed as *Suspicion*), *Malice Aforethought*
- Agatha Christie: *Three Act Tragedy*, *Sad Cypress*, *A Pocket Full of Rye*, *Crooked House*, *And Then There Were None*
- John Dickson Carr: *The Burning Court*, *The Black Spectacles* (U.S. title: *The Problem of the Green Capsule*)
- Raymond Postgate: *Verdict of Twelve*
- Freeman Wills Crofts: *The 12.30 from Croydon*
- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: *A Study in Scarlet*, *The Adventure of the Devil's Foot*
- Dashiell Hammett: *Fly Paper*
- Dorothy Sayers: *The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club*, *Strong Poison*
- Gosho Aoyama: *Case Closed/Detective Conan*
- Rex Stout: *Fer-de-Lance*, *The Red Box*, *Black Orchids*
- Cornell Woolrich: *Waltz into Darkness* (filmed as *Mississippi Mermaid* and *Original Sin*)

#### Other fiction [ edit ]

- V.C. Andrews: *Flowers in the Attic*
- Alexandre Dumas, père: *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers*
- Gustave Flaubert: *Madame Bovary*
- Kaori Yuki: *Count Cain* (*GodChild* after vol. 5) Protagonist Cain Hargreaves is known as the Count/Earl of Poisons. He has quite a collection of poisons, and frequently solves murder cases, almost all of which involve poisons.
- Snow White ate a poisoned apple
- Mingo Swieter in Ricarda Huch's 1917 novel, *The Deruga Case* (curare)
- Baron Vladimir Harkonnen in *Dune* by Frank Herbert
- Unsuccessful poisoning of Ron Weasley in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. The intended victim was Albus Dumbledore.

- David Eddings sagas: In the *Belgariad*, the Nyissan people poison each other on a regular basis; some work as professional poisoners.

## Films [ edit ]

- *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944)
- *D.O.A.* (1950)
- *The Young Poisoner's Handbook* (1995)
- *Crank* (2006)
- Jill Tracy's *The Fine Art of Poisoning*

## Television [ edit ]

- Third and Tenth Doctors in *Doctor Who*
- King Joffrey, Olenna Tyrell, Gregor Clegane, and Jon Arryn in *Game of Thrones*

## Plays [ edit ]

- Joseph Kesselring: *Arsenic and Old Lace*
- William Shakespeare:
  - Romeo commits suicide by poison in *Romeo and Juliet*
  - Hamlet, King Claudius, Gertrude and Laertes in *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*
  - Imogen in *Cymbeline*




## See also [ edit ]

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- [List of people by cause of death](#) and [List of unusual deaths](#)
- [List of fictional toxins](#)
- [Mass suicide](#)
- [Lethal injection](#)
- [Food poisoning](#)
- [Food taster](#)
- [LD<sub>50</sub>](#)
- [Arsenic poisoning](#)
- [Cyanide poisoning](#)
- [Lead poisoning](#)
- [Mercury poisoning](#)
- [Pesticide poisoning](#)
- [Poisonous animals](#)
- [Poisonous plants](#)
- [Venom](#)

## References [ edit ]

1. <sup>^</sup> Public Broadcasting Service, *Secrets of the Dead*, 2011. Accessed 4/25/2012
2. <sup>^</sup> <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3360556,00.html>
3. <sup>^</sup> <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/821634.html>
4. <sup>^</sup> <http://fr.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1170359775445&pagename=JPost/JPArticle/ShowFull> [permanent dead link]
5. <sup>^</sup> Cullen, Pamela V., "A Stranger in Blood: The Case Files on Dr John Bodkin Adams", London, Elliott & Thompson, 2006, ISBN 1-904027-19-9

<span>VTE</span>	<b>Toxicology</b>	<span>hide</span>
	History of poison Toxicology	
<b>Fields</b>	Aquatic toxicology Ecotoxicology Occupational toxicology Entomotoxicology Environmental toxicology Forensic toxicology Medical toxicology In vitro toxicology Toxicogenomics	
<b>Concepts</b>	Acceptable daily intake Acute toxicity Bioaccumulation Biomagnification Fixed-dose procedure Lethal dose Poison Toxic capacity Toxicant Toxin Toxicity class Venom	
<b>Treatments</b>	Activated carbon Antidote Cathartic Chelation therapy Gastric lavage Hemodialysis Hemoperfusion Whole bowel irrigation	
<b>Incidents</b>	1858 Bradford sweets poisoning 2007 pet food recalls Bhopal disaster Minamata disease Niigata Minamata disease Poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko Seveso disaster Consumption of Tide Pods <b>List of poisonings</b>	
<b>Related topics</b>	Biological warfare Carcinogen Food safety Hazard symbol List of extremely hazardous substances Mutagen Occupational safety and health	
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