



The New Jersey Poison Information & Education System

Serving New Jersey Since 1983

Designated regional poison center
for New Jersey by New Jersey
Department of Health and Senior
Services and the American
Association of Poison Control
Centers

PRESS RELEASE

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Allergy Suffers BEWARE

(Newark, NJ) Allergy sufferers know the symptoms...sneezing, watery itchy eyes, nasal congestion, runny nose, etc. Caution is urged when taking allergy medications yourself or giving them to a child. To ease allergy symptoms, many use non-prescription, over-the-counter (OTC) medications. Although these medications may provide much needed relief, side effects are possible. A common misconception about non-prescription medications is that they cannot be dangerous because they are sold over-the-counter.

Recently, a 4 year old child received triple the recommended dose of her allergy medication because it was mistakenly given by mom, dad, and the babysitter. None of the adults were aware that the medication had already been given to the child. The child was confused and hallucinating, resulting in hospitalization.

The New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES) would like to raise awareness about the accidental misuse of OTCs and can lead to many unwanted effects. Adverse effects range from agitation to stomach upset to excessive sleepiness or even liver damage.

We recommend the following tips to prevent poisonings related to medication use:

- Select medications that treat **ONLY** the symptoms you have. For example, use a decongestant if you are congested, but only use decongestants with cough suppressant if you have a cough as well.
- Many times medications with different names and even different intended purposes contain the same active ingredients. Taking these, even if each is in the intended dose, together can result in serious overdose.
- Remember that more does not mean better. Don't take medicines longer or in higher doses than the label recommends. If symptoms persist, it is time to see a doctor.
- Be particularly careful about converting dose instructions. With liquid medications, it is best to use a measuring spoon or a dosing cup marked in teaspoons, not a common kitchen spoon.
- Follow the product label instructions. Be sure to put on a light and your glasses if needed to read the label carefully before each dose is taken or given to someone else.
- Avoid adverse drug interactions. If you are currently taking any prescription or non-prescription medications, ask your pharmacist or health care provider for assistance in choosing non-prescription medications. If this is not possible, questions can be directed to NJPIES at **1-800-222-1222**.

The Poison Control Center Hotline number, **1-800-222-1222**, can be used for treatment advice for emergency poisonings as well as for non-emergency questions regarding medications, household products, plants, or environmental contaminants. The hotline is accessible 24 hours per day, everyday! **Remember, Help Is Just a Phone Call Away!**

located at University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

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