



NEWS RELEASE

The New Jersey Poison Information & Education System - Serving New Jersey Since 1983

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**Celebrate the Easter & Passover Holiday with Peace of Mind
Safety Tips from the Experts at the NJ Poison Control Center**

24/7 Multilingual Hotline: 1-800-222-1222

Dr. Steven Marcus, Executive and Medical Director
Dr. Bruce Ruck, Director, Drug Information and Professional Education
New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

Available for Interviews

NEWARK, N.J. — April 14, 2011 For the past 2 years as families prepared for the Easter and Passover holidays, the NJ Poison Control Center noted an increase in calls related to children getting into cleaning products in the home or a relative's medication. Poison Control Center experts offer the following safety tips on food poisoning/preparation, cleaning product and medication safety, and holiday decorating products.

FOOD POISONING

- Always wash hands with soap and water before and after handling raw foods.
- Perishable foods like raw/cooked meats, poultry, and seafood should be kept refrigerated. If left at room temperature for 2 hours or more, they should be discarded.
- Symptoms of food poisoning include: nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, chills and fever, diarrhea, and weakness. Symptoms can occur 1-8 hours after eating "toxic" food.

CLEANING PRODUCTS

- Keep cleaning products in original containers. Do not use food containers (such as cups or bottles) to store household cleaners and other strong chemicals.
- Lock up all cleaning products.
- Store strong chemicals away from food. Many poisonings occur when one product is mistaken for another.

- Read and follow the directions for use of products. Do this BEFORE using the products. Follow the advice carefully.
- Never mix chemicals. Doing so can create a poisonous gas.

MEDICATION SAFETY

- Keep medicines (as well as vitamins and diet supplements) in original containers. Do this at home AND when traveling.
- Lock up where children can't see or reach them.
- Use containers that are made to keep children out. Replace caps tightly after using a medication.
- Read and follow directions and warnings on the label before taking or giving medicine EVERY TIME.
- Never take or give medicine in the dark.

EGGS

- Always wash hands with soap and water before and after handling raw eggs.
- Raw eggs may carry bacteria known as Salmonella. Cook eggs fully before decorating. If you use raw eggs for cookie dough or cake batter, be sure to use eggs pasteurized in their shells so licking the spoon may be safe. If you happen to touch the liquid inside of a raw egg, immediately wash your hands with soap and water.

CHOCOLATE

- Chocolate can be toxic to both cats and dogs. Symptoms include convulsions, heart problems, nausea, and vomiting.

EASTER GRASS

- Keep away from young children and pets as this product can be a choking hazard. It can cause intestinal obstruction if ingested.

EASTER EGG DYE

- Be sure to use only food dye to color eggs.; most of these are non toxic. Despite their lack of serious toxicity, children should be supervised at all times while decorating their eggs. If small amounts are eaten, there is not much of a problem. A trip to the emergency room may result if a large amount is eaten.

EASTER PLANTS

- Easter Lilly: Keep away from pets. Poisonous to cats.
- Lily of the Valley: If ingested, this plant can cause heart problems.
- Tulips and other bulb spring flowers: The bulbs can be irritating to your skin. If swallowed, they can cause distress.

If you suspect a poisoning, **CALL THE POISON CONTROL CENTER'S HELP HOTLINE IMMEDIATELY at 1-800-222-1222**, for treatment advice. The hotline may be used for emergency poisonings as well as for non-emergency questions regarding medications, household products, plants, environmental contaminants, or other poisons. The hotline is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! Remember, **Help Is Just a Phone Call Away!**

About NJPIES

As New Jersey's only poison control center, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System provides information on poison prevention and treatments. Chartered in 1983, NJPIES provides free consultation through telephone hot line services and the Web. Medical professionals such as physicians, registered nurses and pharmacists offer confidential advice regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention, drugs, food poisoning, animal bites and more. These specialists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NJPIES coordinates state poison education and research, and is designated as the regional poison center by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and the American Association of Poison Control Centers. It tracks incidences of adverse reactions to food, drugs and vaccines in order to monitor potential public health issues and provide data to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A division of the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health of the New Jersey Medical School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, its state-of-the-art center is located on the school's Newark campus.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies should call the bilingual toll-free hot line, 1-800-222-1222, any time. The hearing impaired may call (973) 926-8008. For more information, visit www.njpies.org or call (973) 972-9280.

About UMDNJ

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey is the nation's largest freestanding public health sciences university, with more than 5,500 students attending. The state's three medical schools, a dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health-related professions, a school of nursing and a school of public health are housed on five campuses — Newark, New Brunswick/Piscataway, Scotch Plains, Camden and Stratford. Annually, there are more than two million patient visits at UMDNJ facilities and faculty practices at the campuses. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a level I trauma center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, a mental health and addiction services network.

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