



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

NEWS RELEASE

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Let's Celebrate Labor Day Weekend - Know Your Poison Prevention Safety Tips -

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Available for Interviews

NEWARK, N.J. — August 29, 2012 – As September approaches it's time to celebrate the last holiday of the summer season. During the festivities, it's possible to overlook potential hazards that may cause injury to you and your loved ones. Luckily, the NJ Poison Experts are here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year to help in the event of an emergency or with any concerns.

"Whatever plans you may have for this year's Labor Day weekend, let's not forget that most poisonings can be prevented. It's important to clean up after holiday celebrations. Cigarette butts and alcohol can be dangerous to both children and pets; keep all dangerous substances locked up and out of sight and reach," said Dr. Steven Marcus, Executive and Medical Director of the NJ Poison Control Center.

Follow the safety tips below to keep family festivities safe as we enjoy the last days of summer.

Food (Any food made with mayonnaise or egg, meat, poultry, fish, seafood, etc.)

- Cold foods should be kept refrigerated when not being served.
- **Do not cross-contaminate!** Cooked foods should not be placed on any unwashed plates/containers that previously held raw meat, poultry, fish, or seafood.
- Always wash hands and counters before preparing food. Use clean utensils for cooking and serving.
- **Do not** let food sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Medication (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal, dietary)

- When friends and family visit, make sure all of their medications are kept out of reach of children and pets (such medications should preferably be locked up)
- **Lock up all medicines** – (prescription and non-prescription) – children and teens die every year because adults (parents, guardians, grandparents, etc) fail to realize the danger of keeping medicines in non-secure medicine cabinets, closets and drawers. Since some individuals like to experiment with prescription and non-prescription (over-the-counter) medications to get high, lock up all medications even if there are no toddlers living in the home.
- Safely dispose of any unused and/or expired prescription and over-the-counter medications in the home. Remind the seniors in your lives to do the same. Drop-off sites are available in NJ where these medications can be properly discarded. Call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222 for local drop-off site near you.
- Use caution with alcoholic beverages since the alcohol may interact with medications. Check with your pharmacist or the Poison Control Center to find out if an interaction may occur. Some medications can greatly increase the chance for severe sunburn.

Chemicals (pool products, pesticides, fertilizers, lamp oil, kerosene, lighter fluids, automotive fluids, etc.)

- Jugs containing lamp or torch oil **MUST** be stored in locked cabinets away from food and drinks. When accidentally taken by mouth, such lamp or torch oils can enter the lungs causing pneumonia and even death.
 - Lamp and torch oil refill bottles may closely resemble juice containers; the containers and caps are designed similarly, the oils are colorful and fragranced, the liquids are practically identical in appearance with common fruit juices/drinks!

- Since it is difficult to pour the liquid directly from the refill bottle into the torch, consumers frequently pour the liquid into a plastic or paper cup in order to then transfer it into the torch. This leaves a cup with what appears to be lemonade or apple juice sitting in it making it an invitation for someone to mistakenly ingest the substance with a potentially disastrous outcome. Use a funnel to transfer the fluid; **do not use drinking cups to transfer torch lamp oil from the storage bottle to the lamp, lantern or torch.**
- Read the directions on the label before using.
- Keep all chemicals locked up out of reach of children and pets.
- Store in the product's original, clearly-marked container. Always use child-resistant caps.
- Store chemicals in a cool, dry, well ventilated area with a locked entry.
- Always choose the right pesticide for the job at hand.
- **Do not** apply products on a windy day.
- Wear protective clothing, masks, eye protection when applying chemicals. Wash clothes, footwear or any exposed skin that comes in contact with chemicals.

Spring/Summer Cleaning

- **Good ventilation** is the key to getting harsh fumes from cleaning products out of the house. Simply opening a window is not enough to eliminate dangerous fumes or odors. Use an exhaust fan to eliminate the fumes and to circulate fresh air into the area you are cleaning.
- **Test your carbon monoxide & smoke detectors** to make sure they are working.
- **Do not mix products** –combining products can produce toxic fumes.
- **Clean** when children and pets are not present. Keep products locked up and clean up all spills immediately and thoroughly.
- **Make sure to properly discard** medicines that are not being used. Check expiration dates frequently on all over-the-counter and prescription medications kept in the home. Recent recommendations include combining expired or leftover medicines with used coffee grounds, kitty litter, or something else bad-tasting to children and animals. Place this in a coffee can with a lid, and discard with your household trash. Drop-off sites are available in NJ where these medications can be properly discarded. Call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222 for local drop-off site near you.

Backyard Safety

- Know the name of plants and flowers in and around your home, including your yard and garden.
- Be alert to insects that may bite or sting.
- Make sure all gardening, lawn care products, and pool products are stored in locked cabinets.
- **Do not** pick plants/mushrooms to eat from your backyard or fields. Even experts are often fooled by look-alikes which are toxic.

Safe Grilling

- Store charcoal lighter fluid in locked cabinets, out of sight and reach of children and pets. Swallowing lighter fluid can lead to serious poisoning.
- When taking cooked food off the grill, **do not** put it back on the same plate that held raw food.
- Turn meats over at least once to cook evenly.
- Do not partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meats have reached the proper internal temperature. The color of meat and poultry is not a good indicator of safety.
- Never use your grill indoors, in a garage, shed, etc!

Sun Exposure

- Avoid sunburn by limiting time spent in the sun especially when the sun is the strongest (from 10 am to 2 pm).
- Wear clothing to cover exposed skin (long-sleeve shirts, pants, hats, and sunglasses) and regularly apply sunscreen with a broad spectrum SPF of 15 or higher.
- Use caution in the sun because some medications can greatly increase the chance for severe sunburn even when using sunscreen.

Insect Repellent/Mosquitoes

- Wear long-sleeved, loose-fitting shirts and long pants. Pants should be tucked into socks or boot tops to prevent insects from reaching the skin. Limit outdoor activities at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Eliminate standing water that collects in birdbaths, buckets and containers, old tires, unused pools and roof gutters. Standing water is a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- Be sure window and door screens are in good repair.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the use of insect repellents when outdoors. There are several such repellents approved by the EPA for use. Select a product based on expected uses and exposure time. Apply insect repellent to exposed skin, clothes, sleeping bags, tents, etc. when taking part in outdoor activities. Such repellents are available in many formulations including lotions, solutions, creams, gels, sprays, and towelettes and in different concentrations. Repellents may also be applied differently: DEET is applied to skin and permethrin is applied to clothing. It is important to follow instructions on the product label.

- Insect repellents such as DEET, picaridin and permethrin may be used on children older than 2 months of age. Oil of lemon eucalyptus is not recommended on children under 3 years of age.
- Do not spray insect repellents on the face since they may irritate the eyes and mouth. Instead, spray onto hands and then rub onto the face. Avoid applying repellents to broken skin or wounds, and avoid applying repellents under clothing.

Call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222 if you suspect a poisoning. The NJ Poison Experts are always here to help with accidents or questions involving medicines, chemicals or household products, etc. Help is available in over 150 languages; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Program the Poison Help line (800-222-1222) into your cell phone and post it near your home and office phones too. There are no silly questions and trained medical staff is always available to answer a question, quell a fear, provide advice, or intervene to get emergency services on site and prepped to provide the needed protocol in the fastest response time. When in doubt, check it out - Prevention is truly the best possible medicine.

Real People. Real Answers.

Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) to be poison smart. Be a poison prevention superhero - share poison prevention tips with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

Call to Action – Help is Just a Phone Call Away

NJPIES leaders urge medical professionals, parents, educators, caregivers and the general public to call the toll-free poison center hot line, 800-222-1222, with any poison related question 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. You may also chat or text in using our website, www.njpies.org. **Real People. Real Answers.**

The NJ poison experts recommend putting the number in all family cell phones as well as programming it as a speed dial number on landlines (home and office). In addition, prominently post the number near all phones in the home and office.

Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc.

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. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies, and those with any drug information questions, should call the toll-free hot line, **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 2 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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