



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

NEWS RELEASE

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NJ Child Critically Ill from Concentrated Packets of Laundry Detergent

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. — June, 20, 2012 –

Last night, June 19th, 2012, the NJ Poison Control Center was consulted about a 2 year old NJ toddler who ingested a single laundry detergent pack (aka packet or pod). The child developed excessive vomiting, lethargy and coughing with respiratory distress. The child had to be placed on a mechanical ventilator, according to Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D, Director of Drug Information and Professional Education at the NJ Poison Center.

On May 18th, along with the American Association of Poison Control Centers, NJPIES issued a press that was distributed to all major media outlets urging parents to keep highly concentrated “single dose packs” of laundry detergent locked up and away from children. This case suggests that the public needs to “double down” its efforts at prevention.

Nationally, poison centers are continuing to receive 10-20 calls each day about exposures of children to laundry detergents packaged in small, single-dose packets. The toddler in NJ is the 10th child reported by poison centers to require mechanical ventilation. Some children have been exposed when the product burst after putting it into their mouths resulting in serious complications. Others have gotten the product in their eyes, resulting in significant eye irritation.

The following are examples of exposures to children who have become ill from concentrated laundry detergent packets:

- Ten minutes after a 20-month-old swallowed a laundry detergent packet, the child developed profuse vomiting, wheezing and gasping and then became unresponsive to even painful stimuli.
- A 15-month-old bit into a pack and swallowed a mouthful had profuse vomiting and, after arrival at a hospital, had to be put on a ventilator.
- A 17-month-old bit into a packet and then rapidly developed drowsiness, vomited, breathed the product into the lungs, and had to be put on a ventilator.

“The rapid onset of potentially life threatening symptoms is of great concern” said Dr. Ruck. “Although we aren’t certain what in the product is making the children sick, we urge all parents and caregivers to make sure laundry detergent packs are not accessible to young kids.”

The NJ Poison Experts recommend the following steps:

- Always keep detergents locked up and out of the reach of children.
- Follow the specific disposal instructions on the label.

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- If you think a child has been exposed to a laundry detergent packet, call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222 immediately.

Call to Action – Help is Just a Phone Call Away

The NJ Poison Experts are always here to help medical professionals, parents, educators, caregivers and the general public with accidents or questions involving medicines, chemicals or household products, plants, environmental contaminants, or other poisons. There are no silly questions. Trained medical staff are 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. Help is available in over 150 languages; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. When in doubt, check it out - Prevention is truly the best possible medicine. You may also chat or text in using our website, www.njpies.org.

Poison experts recommend programming the Poison Help line (800-222-1222) into all family cell phones as well as programming it as a speed dial number on landlines (home and office). In addition, prominently post it 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. Be a poison prevention superhero - share poison prevention tips with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

Real People. Real Answers.

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 **800-222-1222**.

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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