



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

NEWS RELEASE

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Parents Beware: High School Exams are Here -- Students Misusing Drugs as Study Aids --

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 6, 2012 — High school can be difficult. Peer pressure, teachers, reports, final exams, school activities and the desire for academic excellence can make life for a high school student quite overwhelming at times. With finals starting in the next week or so, the NJ Poison Experts encourage parents of high school students to talk to their children about the dangers of study drugs (e.g. prescription medicines for ADHD and caffeine) and the symptoms they may cause.

Study drugs are drugs that are misused/abused as study aids. Students often believe that these drugs enhance or focus concentration and increase stamina when they cram for tests or write lengthy papers. The use of study drugs is not new. For years, students have looked for ways to make studying easier, more efficient and more manageable. The drugs of choice are prescription stimulants (amphetamine derivatives and methylphenidate) and caffeine.

- **Prescription medicines:** These medicines contain the stimulants dextroamphetamine, methylphenidate and their derivatives. Some students without ADHD “abuse” these medicines as a study drug. For some people with undiagnosed or preexisting mental health issues, these prescription drugs can make their conditions worse. Chronic use also can lead to addiction. Parents should remind their children that it is illegal to share their prescription medications with someone else. In addition, it should be reinforced that it may be harmful to take someone else’s prescription drugs.
- **Caffeine:** Historically, this has been limited to drinking multiple cups of coffee or tea to help students through all-nighters. The dose is increased considerably, however, by taking caffeine pills or consuming multiple energy drinks. Caffeine pills can contain up to 200 mg. of caffeine in each pill, two to three times the amount in a cup of coffee. Energy drinks also contain a large amount of caffeine, and some contain additional stimulants.

According to Dr. Ruck a clinical pharmacist/toxicologist at the NJ Poison Center, “the following symptoms may indicate someone is overusing or misusing the above study drugs.”

- Anxiety, nervousness, jitters or agitation
- Tremors
- Insomnia
- Loss of appetite

- Weight loss
- Upset stomach with nausea and vomiting
- Increased heart rate
- Elevated blood pressure

Call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222 if someone experiences the above symptoms. In addition, 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 are 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.