



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

## NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:

800-222-1222 (800-962-1253 outside NJ)

### NJ's First Heat Wave of the Season -- Poison Center Experts Warn About Safety --

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*Available for Interviews*

(Newark, NJ) – May 30, 2013 — New Jersey residents find themselves in the midst of a heat wave expected to linger into the weekend where temps are predicted to reach 90 degrees or higher.

The NJ Poison Experts are reminding the public that with such excessive heat, the potential for someone to develop heat-related illness increases significantly. Often referred to as “heatstroke” or “sunstroke,” heat-related illness occurs when a person’s body temperature rises to a dangerous level. Factors such as underlying medical problems, dehydration and medication usage all play a role in heat-related illness. Humans can reduce their body temperature in various ways, the most obvious of which is sweating. On hot, humid days, the increased moisture in the air slows the evaporation of sweat. When sweating is not adequate to cool your body, your temperature rises, and you may become ill.

It is important to remember that the elderly, the very young, those with chronic illnesses, and pets are at greatest risk for developing heat-related illnesses. In addition, certain medications increase one’s risk. By knowing who is at risk and what prevention measures to take, heat-related illness and death can be prevented. Call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222 if you have any questions regarding heat-related illnesses.

#### Medications, which increase the risk of developing heat related illness, include but are not limited to:

- Tricyclic antidepressants (amitriptyline- Elavil<sup>®</sup>, imipramine- Tofranil<sup>®</sup>, etc)
- Antihistamines (diphenhydramine- Benadryl<sup>®</sup>, chlorpheniramine- Chlor-Trimeton<sup>®</sup>)
- Diuretics (furosemide- Lasix<sup>®</sup>, hydrochlorothiazide, Diuril<sup>®</sup>)
- Antipsychotics (haloperidol- Haldol<sup>®</sup>)

#### Tips to prevent heat illness:

- Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting, open-woven clothes.
- Wear a vented hat in the sun to protect yourself from the sun’s rays. Don’t forget sunscreen!
- Drink extra water (fluids) all day and less tea, coffee, cola and alcoholic beverages! Do NOT wait until you feel thirsty to drink – it may be too late!
- During outdoor activities, take frequent breaks and drink plenty of water or other fluids, even if you don’t feel thirsty.
- Reduce or schedule outdoor activity for cooler times of the day, before 10am and after 6pm.
- If you have a chronic medical problem, ask your doctor about how to deal with the heat.

#### Help is Just a Phone Call Away

If the unthinkable happens, it’s good to know help is just a phone call away. If someone is unconscious, not breathing, seizing/convulsing, bleeding profusely, difficult to arouse/wake up, etc. call 911 immediately, otherwise call the poison center at 800-222-1222. Doing online research and learning about medical conditions is a new sign of the times and a must-do for a savvy patient. But savvy patients need to know when it’s important to put down the smartphone and dial an emergency number to get help. The NJ Poison Experts are always here to help with emergencies 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 our health professionals 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. Remember, Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

## Real People. Real Answers.

As of July 1, 2013, New Jersey Medical School will become part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/njpies](http://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 hotline, 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.njpies.org) or call **973-972-9280**.

### **About UMDNJ**

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) is New Jersey's only health sciences university with more than 6,000 students on five campuses attending three medical schools, the State's only dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health related professions, a school of nursing and New Jersey's only school of public health. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a Level I Trauma Center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, which provides a continuum of healthcare services with multiple locations throughout the State.

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