



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

## NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:

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

### Winter Storm Predicted to Dump Significant Snow on NJ

-- NJ Poison Experts Here to Help, Call 800-222-1222 --

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New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

*Available for Interviews*

(Newark, N.J.) — February 7, 2013 — Most of NJ is under a Winter Storm Watch with significant snow accumulation expected. As area residents and businesses prepare for the first major snow storm of 2013, the NJ Poison Experts remind everyone that they are here around the clock (24/7) to answer calls for help during the storm.

To prepare for tomorrow's storm, program the Poison Help Hotline (800-222-1222) into all phones NOW. Don't waste valuable time looking up information on the Internet when every minute counts. "Many of the calls we get are genuine emergencies," said Dr. Steven Marcus, Executive and Medical Director of the NJ Poison Center. "Poisons and medicines may act very quickly. Having a poison expert give you exact instructions for your specific situation can help significantly during those critical first few minutes." The NJ Poison Experts offer the following winter safety recommendations.

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**Carbon monoxide** is a clear and odorless poisonous gas. Unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning is common during severe weather conditions. Signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may include:

- headaches
- sleepiness
- fatigue
- confusion and irritability
- nausea
- vomiting
- irregular heartbeat
- impaired vision and coordination
- death

NJPIES recommends:

- Never use gasoline powered equipment/generators or tools and/or kerosene heaters inside the house or in enclosed spaces.
- Do not leave the car running inside the garage with the garage door closed.
- Do not use charcoal or propane grills inside the home. Do not heat the house/apartment with the stove!
- Clear any snow accumulation from all outside dryer and heating vents.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in homes and check them periodically to make sure they are working properly.

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**Hypothermia**, a body temperature of less than or equal to 95°F, kills many Americans every year. Infants, children, and the elderly are at greatest risk for hypothermia. Signs and symptoms of hypothermia may include:

- numbness
- fatigue
- poor coordination
- slurred speech
- impaired mental state
- blueness or puffiness of the skin
- difficulty concentrating
- death

#### NJPIES recommends:

- Stay warm and dress appropriately! For prolonged exposure to cold, wear insulated or layered clothing that does not retain moisture. Wear a head cover!
- Avoid over-exertion and excessive sweating in the cold.
- Warm beverages can help increase the body temperature.
- Avoid drinking alcohol, especially in cold temperatures.
- Some medications may increase your risk. Check with your doctor, pharmacist or call the Poison Control Center

If you believe you or someone you know is suffering from hypothermia or carbon monoxide poisoning, call 911 immediately. If you have any questions about carbon monoxide poisoning or how medications may be affected by the frigid temperatures, call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222. 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 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 our 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. Remember, Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

### **Real People. Real Answers.**

#### 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](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. Be poison smart - share poison prevention tips with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

#### 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 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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