



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

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:

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

Avoiding Warm Weather Poisonings - Keeping Memorial Day Weekend Safe -

Steven Marcus, MD, Executive and Medical Director,
Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Director, Drug Information and Professional Education
New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

Available for Interviews

NEWARK, N.J. — May 20, 2013 – Memorial Day Weekend, the official start of the summer season, is the usual time for opening pools, firing up the barbecue, and kicking back to relax with family and friends. Unfortunately, it is also the start of the peak season for warm weather related exposures involving gasoline, lamp oil, lighter fluid, torch fuel, and pool chemicals. The NJ Poison Experts want to call the public's attention to the potential hazards that may cause injury to you and your loved ones. A few common exposures from last year's season include:

- 2 year old was found coughing after playing with a gasoline jug in the backyard
- 44 year old opened up a container of pool chlorine and started choking after inhaling the chemical
- 3 year old swallowed torch fuel/oil thinking it was apple juice because it was left in a colored plastic cup on the patio table

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. "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.

Don't spend your holiday in an emergency room. Prevent mishaps from occurringRemember, most poisonings are preventable! Follow these safety tips below.

Food

- Cold foods should be kept refrigerated when not being served. **Do not** let food sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- **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.

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 fragrant; 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 all chemicals in their 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 chemical, for example pesticide, for the job at hand.

- more-

- 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.

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 meat 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 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.

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 NJ Poison Center at 800-222-1222. While a quick web search may seem like an easy option, it is no substitute for calling the poison center and speaking with medical experts (doctors, nurses, and pharmacists). A mistreated exposure can escalate an easy-in-home treatment into a trip to the hospital. In the event of a poison exposure, every second counts so calling the poison center is the smart thing to do!! You may also chat or text in using our website, www.njpies.org.

The NJ Poison Experts are always here to help with emergencies or questions involving medicines, chemicals, household products, environmental contaminants, plants, or other poisons. 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 by calling, texting, or chatting - Prevention is truly the best possible medicine. Follow us on Facebook (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.

Real People. Real Answers.

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

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

- more -

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.

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.

###