

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

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:
800-222-1222 (800-962-1253 outside NJ)

Ground Rules for Safe “Trick or Treating”

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Available for Interviews

(Newark, NJ) – October 7, 2014 — Experts at the NJ Poison Center urge parents and caregivers to be alert and take precautions to avoid dangerous mishaps while celebrating Halloween this year. Be sure to keep Trick-or-treaters safe!

“Halloween is one of the busiest times of the year for the doctors, nurses, and pharmacists answering calls for help on our 24 hour hotline,” said Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the state’s poison center. “This time of year, we get calls about anything from bug bites to stomach aches (usually due to consumption of too much candy—not necessarily tainted candy). Mishaps can occur at any time, and being prepared and informed about how to handle them in advance can ensure a happy outcome.”

A topic unique to this time of year is the “accidental” ingestion of glow stick liquid. “The substance in glow sticks is not a toxin, just an irritant,” said Marcus. “But very often, parents call 9-1-1 or spend hours in the emergency room, only to be told that the resulting sore throat and upset stomach will be self-limited and not produce any long term problem—advice that would have been quickly provided over the phone by one of our poison experts.” Although such exposures rarely produce any other problem, it is best to call and check with the poison experts to be sure.

“While family members and internet searches may have some answers, these are not the best ways to get immediate help,” Marcus cautioned. “Calling the poison center at 1-800-222-1222 is always the fastest way to get the professional help or information you need in potential poisoning cases.” Time is of the essence in such situations. Those who choose to not do anything are placing themselves or a loved one at risk. “Keeping the number by the home phone and/or programming it as a contact in cell phones would be a very good idea,” said Dr. Marcus.

Experts offer these safety tips to reduce the risk of childhood poisoning injuries.

- Children should be accompanied by an adult when “trick or treating”
- Go only to homes of people known to you
- Avoid homemade treats
- Use non-toxic makeup to paint faces and body parts
- Teach children not to consume food items, drinks or treats that may be offered, until an adult has thoroughly checked them
- Throw away any spoiled, unwrapped or suspicious treats
- Make sure any items that can cause choking, such as hard candy, are given to children of an appropriate age to avoid choking
- Do not let children give treats to pets; chocolates and raisins may be poisonous to animals
- Dispose of tin foil and cellophane candy wrappers properly to void children and pets choking on them if swallowed

- Keep all medicines out of children's reach
- Teach your child that medicine is not candy
- Lock up medications, especially those that can be mistaken for candy

Do not take chances by waiting until symptoms. If an exposure occurs, 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 Experts at (1-800-222-1222)**. "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 Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the NJ Poison Center. "Having a poison expert give you exact instructions for your specific situation can help significantly during those critical first few minutes."

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

Remember, calls are free and confidential and help is always available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year, even during bouts of Mother Nature like Hurricane Sandy. Call 800-222-1222, chat via www.njpies.org, or text in at 8002221222@njpies.org to contact a NJ Poison Expert. Help is available in more than 150 languages.

We are social. Join us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc. Share what you learn 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 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus. NJPIES is funded, in part, by the NJ Department of Health and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

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 Rutgers

Established in 1766, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is America's eighth oldest institution of higher learning and one of the nation's premier public research universities. Serving more than 65,000 students on campuses, centers, institutes and other locations throughout the state, Rutgers is the only public university in New Jersey that is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities.

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) is the health care education, research, and clinical division of Rutgers University, comprising nine schools and their attendant faculty practices, centers, institutes and clinics; New Jersey's leading comprehensive cancer care center; and New Jersey's largest behavioral health care network.