

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

## **NEWS RELEASE**

Media Contacts:

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

### Is Your Home Lead Free?

- Lead Poisoning Remains a Concern for NJ Families -

Steven Marcus, MD, Executive and Medical Director  
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New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

*Available for Interviews*

**(Newark, NJ) – October 7, 2014** — Childhood lead poisoning is considered one of the most preventable diseases among young children yet thousands of children living in the United States have elevated blood lead levels that may cause significant damage to their health.

National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 19-25, 2014) raises awareness of the serious health consequences of lead poisoning. The effects can be extremely harmful for young children (ages 6 and under) and developing fetuses. Too much lead in one's body (lead poisoning) may lead to a number of conditions such as learning and developmental disabilities, decreased growth, hyperactivity, impaired hearing and brain damage. Lead can pass from mother to unborn child. Pregnant women must take the necessary precautions to reduce their exposure to lead.

The NJ Poison Experts remind you that lead poisoning is preventable. Major sources of lead exposure include lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust (especially dust from renovating or repairs) and soil from deteriorating homes/buildings built before 1978. In addition, lead may be found in items such as candy, make up, pottery and folk medicine made in other countries.

"Lead is of particular concern during the rebuilding phase of Hurricane Sandy," said Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the NJ Poison Center. Many NJ communities still find themselves in the recovery phase. "Lead-contaminated dust from renovations, repairs, and rebuilding pose serious concern to the health and well-being of those living and working in the home or building." It is extremely important to test the paint for lead prior to doing any repairs. If your home or building was built before 1978, chances are it contains some lead-based paint on the walls, window sills, door frames and woodwork. Be sure to hire professionals who are certified in lead-safe work practices.

Reducing your family's exposure to lead is the best way to prevent its harmful effects. Below are some simple ways to prevent exposure:

1. Test your home for lead if you have young children or pregnant women in your household. Remember to also do this when purchasing an older home (built before 1978).
2. Test your child for lead poisoning. Even if young children seem healthy, ask your doctor to test them anyway. Health professionals recommend lead screening for children ages 1 and 2.
3. Learn how to prevent lead poisoning. The NJ Poison Experts are available 24/7/365 in the event that you or a loved one is exposed to lead or have questions/concerns regarding lead poisoning. Call 1-800-222-1222 for free, expert advice.

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](http://www.njpies.org), or text in at [8002221222@njpies.org](mailto: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](http://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.**

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#### **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](http://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.