

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

## ***MEDIA ALERT***

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

### **DEA Helps You Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinet – Take a Stand against Unintentional Poisonings and Rx Drug Abuse –**

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New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

*Available for Interviews*

**(Newark, NJ) – September 18, 2015** — The US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is coordinating a free nationwide drug "take-back" day on September 26<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 2PM. This one-day event will allow you to drop off any unwanted, unused or expired medications for safe disposal. This event is free of charge and drop-offs will be strictly anonymous.

New Jersey law enforcement agencies will join other states in participating in this national event. This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Many times those that abuse prescription medications obtain them from family and friends, including from the home medicine cabinet. Medicines that are not needed and remain in homes are highly susceptible to being stolen, misused, and abused. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of unintentional poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs.

Data results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH): Summary of National Findings showed more than half of the nonmedical users of pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives aged 12 or older got the prescription drugs they most recently used "from a friend or relative for free." Over twenty percent (20%) of those interviewed stated they took the medication without the consent of the owner! The most prevalent category of misused prescription drugs among youths in 2013 was pain relievers.<sup>1</sup>

We urge everyone to use a lockable medicine cabinet or any other lockable container to keep all medications, both prescription and over the counter, locked up at all times in their home. This will help prevent both an unintentional exposure of a young child and access by those seeking the medication for other than the intended purpose.

This is a great opportunity for those who may have missed the previous events or who have accumulated more unwanted, unused medications, since the last take back event. It will help keep dangerous, addictive medications off of the streets as well as helping to ensure environmentally sound disposal practices.

Make a difference in your community – mark Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> on your calendar and commit to dropping off your unneeded or expired medications. All sites will operate from 10 AM to 2 PM. Contact the New Jersey Poison Experts at 800-222-1222 for a participating site near you. Remember to remind the seniors in your lives to do the same. If you are unable to attend the September 26<sup>th</sup> event, you may take your medication to one of the permanent RX drop-off boxes located in many NJ communities. Call the NJ Poison Center at 800-222-1222 to assist you in finding a permanent site in your area.

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<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings, NSDUH Series H-48, HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4863. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

"If you have any questions regarding the DEA's Take-Back event or if you believe your child, pet, or anyone else has ingested something that could be harmful, we are here to help you!" said Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the NJ Poison Center. 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.

"It's good to know expert help is just a phone call away so program the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222) into your cell phones," said Dr. Marcus. Poison center experts can be reached anytime day or night, including weekends and holidays. Services are fast, free, and confidential with multilingual capability. Call 800-222-1222, chat [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org), or text [8002221222@njpies.org](mailto:8002221222@njpies.org). The hearing impaired may call 973-926-8008.

Remember, every minute counts in poisoning situations so do not take chances by either waiting until symptoms occur or waste valuable time looking up information on the Internet. Just pick up the phone and call a poison expert (800-222-1222). Many of the calls the poison center gets are genuine emergencies. Having a poison expert give you exact instructions for your specific situation can help significantly during those critical first few minutes. A quick response by both the caller and the poison center expert can make a difference in preventing serious injury and saving lives

### Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

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. Stay tuned for more poison prevention week safety information.

### 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 Emergency Medicine 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

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