

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

NEWS RELEASE

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

Danger in an Unexpected Place – Children Sickened by Industrial Cleaning Products from Parents' Workplace –

Diane P. Calello, 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, NJ) – November 14, 2016 — A simple decision to take home a commercial cleaning product from work led to dangerous consequences for two New Jersey families within the recent month. For the second time in a four-week period, a young child has been injured and hospitalized after drinking a commercial stove cleaner/degreaser taken home by a family member who works in a restaurant.

Upon further investigation, it seems the products involved were taken home in non-child resistant packaging and/or transferred into an old water bottle, according to Bruce Ruck, PharmD., Managing Director of the NJ Poison Center. "Removing any product from its original, labeled container is setting the stage for the perfect storm as seen here with these cases," says Ruck. Degreasing products may contain high levels of lye, a corrosive chemical which can do permanent damage to a patient's mouth, throat, and GI tract.

Unfortunately, these are not isolated cases. Poison centers around the country, including New Jersey, are all too familiar with the tragic consequences of removing household/industrial cleaning products, pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, medicines, etc. from their original containers and storing them in unlabeled, old food or drink containers (bottles, cans, cups, glasses). It's only a matter of time for someone – adult or child – to mistake those containers for a beverage.

Parents and family members of young children must be careful about what they bring home from work. According to Dr. Diane Calello, Medical Director of the NJ Poison Center and Pediatric Emergency Physician, many industrial/commercial grade products are very concentrated and contain strong chemicals not allowed for household use. "Even in their original containers, industrial-strength cleaners may not have the same level of child-resistant packaging required of household grade products. The problem is made far worse when the product is transferred into another container which may look like a juice bottle or other beverage. Tragedy can and often does occur."

Fortunately in these two New Jersey cases, each child was extremely lucky and is expected to make a full recovery in time. "The next case could cause a lifelong injury, or worse," says Calello, who encourages families to lock up their cleaning products in cabinets high and out of sight of children.

Do not take chances by waiting until symptoms occur. If an exposure 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 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," says Ruck. "Having a poison expert give you real-time instructions for your specific situation can make all the difference."

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

We are social. Join us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter (@NJPoisonCenter) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc. Stay tuned for more poison prevention week safety information.

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 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 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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