

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

## NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:

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

### Beat the Heat

-- High Temps Can Make You Sick --

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) – July 18, 2017 — Today is a hot one around the Garden State. As everyone continues to go about his or her daily routines, it's important to remember that body temperature can rise to a dangerous level, making you extremely sick. Heat-related illness and deaths are preventable. Know the signs before you become a statistic.

#### Signs of heat-related illness (CDC) <sup>1</sup>

- **Heat exhaustion:** heavy sweating; weakness; cold, pale, and clammy skin; fast, weak pulse; nausea or vomiting; fainting  
What to do: move to a cooler location; lie down and loosen clothing; apply cool, wet cloths to as much of the body as possible; sip water; seek medical attention if the person vomits and continues vomiting
- **Heat stroke/sun stroke:** high body temperature (above 103 degrees Fahrenheit); hot, red skin - dry or moist; rapid and strong pulse; possible unconsciousness  
What to do: CALL 911 immediately and follow the operator's directions - this is a medical emergency; move the person to a cooler place; reduce the person's body temperature with cool cloths or a bath; do NOT give liquids

#### Tips to prevent heat illness:

- Always check for children and pets when leaving your car. Hot cars can kill. Leaving the windows down does not prevent them from getting heatstroke.
- Air conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death.
- Drink extra water (fluids) all day and less tea, coffee, cola and alcoholic beverages. Do NOT wait until you feel thirsty to drink – it may be too late!
- Reduce or schedule outdoor activity for cooler times of the day, before 10am and after 6pm.
- During outdoor activities, take frequent breaks and drink plenty of water or other fluids, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting, open-woven clothes.
- Wear a vented hat in the sun to protect yourself from the sun's rays. Don't forget sunscreen!
- If you have a chronic medical problem, ask your doctor about how to deal with the heat.

"It is important to remember that the elderly, the very young, those with chronic illnesses, and pets are at greatest risk for developing such illnesses," said Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., NJ Poison Center, Rutgers NJ Medical School. Other factors such as dehydration and medicine usage may also play a role in developing heat-related illness. "Yes, you can get sick from the heat and some medications increase that chance."

---

<sup>1</sup> CDC Emergency Partners Newsletter. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. June 24, 2016.  
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USCDC/bulletins/150a924>

**Medicines known to increase your risk of heat-related illness (not limited to this list):**

- Some antidepressants
- Antihistamines (allergy medications)
- Diuretics (water pills)
- Antipsychotics

"By knowing who is at risk and what prevention measures to take, heat-related injury and death can be prevented," said Ruck. Call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222 for emergencies as well as for questions or concerns regarding the medicines you take and their effects on increasing the risk of heat-related injury. If someone has collapsed, stopped breathing, or convulsing/seizing call 911 immediately, otherwise call us (NJ Poison Center) at 1-800-222-1222. Calls are free and confidential. Help is available 24/7 in more than 150 languages.

Every minute counts in poisoning situations. Do not take chances by either waiting until symptoms occur or waste valuable time looking up information on the Internet. A quick response by both the caller and the poison center expert can make a difference in preventing serious injury and saving lives. Save the Poison Help Line (800-222-1222) in your cell phone and post it somewhere visible in your home – It just may save you back.

**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) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc.

**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](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.