

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

## ***PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT***

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

### **NJ Poison Center Sees a Spike in Mushroom Poisoning Don't be the Next Case**

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New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

*Available for Interviews*

**(Newark, NJ) – August 3, 2017** Warning: Never eat wild mushrooms whether growing in your garden, on your lawn or in the wild!

**15 cases since July 24, 2017**  
**Ages of patients: 15 months to 75 years old**

Several of these cases have resulted in hospitalizations with potentially life-threatening consequences. No matter the scenario, picking wild mushrooms is dangerous and risky. Many edible mushrooms have toxic “look-a-likes.” Eating even a few bites of certain mushrooms can cause severe illness. Some symptoms of mushroom poisoning include intense vomiting and diarrhea, dehydration, damage to vital organs like the liver and even death.



Courtesy of Rachel Haroz, MD of Cooper Medical Center

“Picking and eating wild mushrooms can be a dangerous game”, says Dr. Diane Calello, Medical Director of the NJ Poison Center, Rutgers NJ Medical School. “Even those who think they can identify a toxic mushroom can be fooled”.

Experienced mushroom pickers are even wrong sometimes, so we urge you to take this warning seriously. Online mushroom identification sites can be falsely reassuring. Parents must teach their children to never put wild plants, berries, nuts, or mushrooms into their mouths. Remember, your family pets are highly susceptible to mushroom poisoning as well.

If an exposure should occur, do not take a chance by waiting until symptoms appear or wasting time looking up information on the Internet. Time is of the essence especially when it comes to mushroom poisoning. If someone is unconscious,

not breathing, seizing, difficult to wake up, etc. call 9-1-1 immediately, otherwise call the **NJ Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.**

Calling the poison center is always the fastest way to get the medical help or information you need. The poison center will arrange for an expert to identify the mushroom and the center can then provide advice on management depending on the mushroom's identification.

Remember to

- Remove any remaining parts of the mushroom from the victim's mouth and place those fragments and all mushrooms that are in the immediate vicinity of the incident into one or more paper bags (NOT plastic!).
- Take a digital photograph of the mushroom(s) in question. It helps to take a picture of the mushroom next to other objects such as a coin, ruler, etc. to provide a sense of scale.

**Call to action:** Be prepared for any emergency - keep the Poison Help line (1-800-222-1222) handy by saving it as a contact in your phone.

### **Help is Just a Phone Call Away!**

We are social. Join us on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/njpies) (www.facebook.com/njpies) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter) (@NJPoisonCenter) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc.

### **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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