



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

MEDIA ALERT

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Beware of Medication Mix-Ups

-- Help is a Phone Call Away --

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New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

Available for Interviews

Newark, N.J. — March 2, 2012 — Be Alert to Possible Prescription Dispensing Errors

This week the New Jersey Poison Control Center received several calls regarding a mix-up in children's medications. A cancer medication was inadvertently added to several children's fluoride prescriptions. The particular medication has very low level toxicity so no damage occurred to the children. The potential for harm was, and is, present if such an event should occur.

With the complexity of the modern pharmacy and the stress upon the dispensing pharmacist, errors may occur. It is important for the consumer to be vigilant of what medications are prescribed for him/her and to double check the accuracy of all prescriptions before taking them home from the pharmacy. Ask your pharmacist to review your prescription with you. Your pharmacist is there to help insure your safety. If you use a mail order prescription service, read the documentation carefully and if there is any question, call the mail order pharmacy to verify the medications before you take any of the medication or call the poison center for help.

The NJ Poison Experts remind the public to **ALWAYS** review the prescriptions they receive from pharmacies.

ALWAYS verify

- the name of the person the medication is for
- the name of the medication
- the strength of the dose
- the capsules, tablets or caplets are uniform in color, size, shape and markings

If a refill of medication looks different in any way, contact the pharmacy you received the prescription from for verification. If there is a question left after discussing with the pharmacist, the pharmacist may contact the prescribing physician for further clarification

The NJ Poison Experts are also here to help – they can identify medications based upon the imprint code on the pill itself. **DO NOT TAKE CHANCES; call the NJ Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.** Poison center experts (doctors, registered nurses, and pharmacists) are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. All calls are free and confidential and a translation service is available for over 100 languages. Remember, Help Is Just a Phone Call Away!

Call to Action – Help is Just a Phone Call Away

NJPIES leaders urge medical professionals, parents, educators, caregivers and the general public to call the toll-free poison center hot line, 800-222-1222, with any poison related question as well as for non-emergency questions regarding medications, household products, plants, environmental contaminants, or other poisons. The hotline is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The NJ poison experts recommend putting the number in all family cell phones as well as programming it as a speed dial number on landlines. In addition, the hotline number should be prominently posted near all phones in the home. 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 Preventive Medicine and Community Health of the New Jersey Medical School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, it has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus.

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 UMDNJ

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey is the nation's largest freestanding public health sciences university, with more than 5,500 students attending. The state's three medical schools, a dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health-related professions, a school of nursing and a school of public health are housed on five campuses — Newark, New Brunswick/Piscataway, Scotch Plains, Camden and Stratford. Annually, there are more than 2 million patient visits at UMDNJ facilities and faculty practices at the campuses. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a level I trauma center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, a mental health and addiction services network.

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