



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

## NEWS RELEASE

### Media Contacts:

Alicia Gambino, MA, MCHES, NJPIES Director of Public Education, 973-972-9280, [agambino@njpies.org](mailto:agambino@njpies.org)

### Excessive Heat Warning for New Jersey

-- NJ Poison Experts Advise on Heat and Sun-Related Illnesses --

Steven Marcus, Executive and Medical Director,  
Dr. Bruce Ruck, Director, Drug Information and Professional Education  
New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

*Available for Interviews*

Newark, N.J. — June 19, 2012 — Today, the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management issued an excessive heat warning for tomorrow (Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>) into Friday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. Temperatures are expected to reach into the upper 90's and even quite possibly 100 degrees or higher.

The NJ Poison Experts are reminding the public that with a heat warning in effect, the potential for someone developing heat-related illness increases significantly. Often referred to as "heatstroke" or "sunstroke," heat-related illness occurs when a person's body temperature rises to a dangerous level. Factors such as underlying medical problems, dehydration and medication usage all play a role in heat-related illness. Human beings can reduce their body temperature in various ways, the most obvious of which is sweating. On hot, humid days, the increased moisture in the air slows the evaporation of sweat. When sweating is not adequate to cool your body, your temperature rises, and you may become ill.

It is important to remember that the elderly, the very young, those with chronic illnesses, and pets are at greatest risk for developing heat-related illnesses. In addition, certain medications increase one's risk. By knowing who is at risk and what prevention measures to take, heat-related illness and death can be prevented

### Medications, which increase the risk of developing heat related illness, include but are not limited to:

- Tricyclic antidepressants (amitriptyline- Elavil<sup>®</sup>, imipramine- Tofranil<sup>®</sup>, etc)
- Antihistamines (diphenhydramine- Benadryl<sup>®</sup>, chlorpheniramine- Chlor-Trimeton<sup>®</sup>)
- Diuretics (furosemide- Lasix<sup>®</sup>, hydrochlorothiazide, Diuril<sup>®</sup>)
- Antipsychotics (haloperidol- Haldol<sup>®</sup>)

### Tips to prevent heat illness:

- Air-conditioning is the number one protective factor against heat-related illness and death.
- 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!
- 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!
- During outdoor activities, take frequent breaks and drink plenty of water or other fluids, even if you don't feel thirsty.

- Reduce or schedule outdoor activity for cooler times of the day, before 10am and after 6pm.
- If you have a chronic medical problem, ask your doctor about how to deal with the heat.

Call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222 if you have any questions regarding heat-related illnesses. If you suspect someone may be suffering from a serious heat-related illness, call 911 and immediately go to the emergency room. In addition, the NJ Poison Experts are always here to help with accidents or questions involving medicines, chemicals or household products, etc. Help is available in over 150 languages; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Program the Poison Help line (800-222-1222) into your cell phone and post it near your home and office phones too. There are no silly questions and trained medical staff are always available to answer a question, quell a fear, provide advice, or intervene to get emergency services on site and prepped to provide the needed protocol in the fastest response time. When in doubt, check it out - Prevention is truly the best possible medicine.

### **Real People. Real Answers.**

Follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/njpies](http://www.facebook.com/njpies)) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) to be poison smart. Be a poison prevention superhero - share poison prevention tips with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

### **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. You may also chat or text in using our website, [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org). **Real People. Real Answers.**

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 (home and office). In addition, prominently post the number near all phones in the home and office.

Follow 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.

### **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. NJPIES 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](http://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.