

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

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:

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

Don't Spend Your Holiday in the ER -NJ Poison Experts – A Phone Call Away-

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Available for Interviews

(Newark, NJ) – August 22, 2014 — As September approaches it's time to celebrate the last days of summer. Don't spend your holiday in an emergency room. Prevent mishaps from occurringRemember, most poisonings are preventable! Follow the safety tips below.

Food

- Do not cross-contaminate! Cooked foods should not be placed on any unwashed plates/containers that previously held raw meat, poultry, fish, or seafood.
- Cold foods should be kept refrigerated when not being served. Do not let food sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.
- Always wash hands and counters before preparing food. Use clean utensils for cooking and serving.

Medication (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal, dietary)

- When friends and family visit, lock up all of their medications (prescription and over-the-counter). Children, teens and pets die every year because adults (parents, guardians, grandparents, etc.) fail to realize the danger of keeping medicines in non-secure medicine cabinets, closets and drawers.
- Safely dispose of any unused and/or expired prescription and over-the-counter medications in the home. Remind the seniors in your lives to do the same. Drop-off sites are available in NJ where these medications can be properly discarded. Call the NJ Poison Experts at 800-222-1222 for local drop-off site near you.
- Use caution with alcoholic beverages since the alcohol may interact with medications. Check with your pharmacist or the Poison Control Center to find out if an interaction may occur. Some medications can greatly increase the chance for severe sunburn.

Chemicals (pool products, pesticides, fertilizers, lamp oil, kerosene, lighter fluids, automotive fluids, etc.)

- Jugs containing lamp or torch oil must be stored in locked cabinets away from food and drinks. When accidentally taken by mouth, such lamp or torch oils can enter the lungs causing pneumonia and even death.
 - Lamp and torch oil refill bottles may closely resemble juice containers; the containers and caps are designed similarly, the oils are colorful and fragrant; the liquids are practically identical in appearance with common fruit juices/drinks!
 - Since it is difficult to pour the liquid directly from the refill bottle into the torch, consumers frequently pour the liquid into a plastic or paper cup in order to then transfer it into the torch. This leaves a cup with what appears to be lemonade or apple juice sitting in it making it an invitation for someone to mistakenly ingest the substance with a potentially disastrous outcome. Use a funnel to transfer the fluid; do not use drinking cups to transfer torch lamp oil from the storage bottle to the lamp, lantern or torch.
- Read the directions on the label before using.
- Keep all chemicals locked up out of reach of children and pets.
- Store all chemicals in their original, clearly-marked container. Always use child-resistant caps.
- Store chemicals in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area with a locked entry.

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- Always choose the right chemical, for example pesticide, for the job at hand.
- Do not apply products on a windy day.
- Wear protective clothing, masks, eye protection when applying chemicals. Wash clothes, footwear or any exposed skin that comes in contact with chemicals.

Backyard Safety

- Know the name of plants and flowers in and around your home, including your yard and garden.
- Be alert to insects that may bite or sting.
- Make sure all gardening, lawn care products, and pool products are stored in locked cabinets.
- Do not pick plants/mushrooms to eat from your backyard or fields. Even experts are often fooled by look-alikes which are toxic.
- Eliminate standing water that collects in birdbaths, buckets and containers, old tires, unused pools and roof gutters. Standing water is a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Safe Grilling

- Store charcoal lighter fluid in locked cabinets, out of sight and reach of children and pets. Swallowing lighter fluid can lead to serious poisoning.
- When taking cooked food off the grill, do not put it back on the same plate that held raw food.
- Turn meats over at least once to cook evenly.
- Do not partially grill meat or poultry and finish cooking later.
- Use a meat thermometer to make sure meats have reached the proper internal temperature. The color of meat and poultry is not a good indicator of safety.
- Never use your grill indoors, in a garage, shed, etc.!

Sun Exposure

- Avoid sunburn by limiting time spent in the sun especially when the sun is the strongest (from 10 am to 2 pm).
- Wear clothing to cover exposed skin (long-sleeve shirts, pants, hats, and sunglasses) and regularly apply sunscreen with a broad spectrum SPF of 15 or higher.
- Use caution in the sun because some medications can greatly increase the chance for severe sunburn even when using sunscreen. Speak to your physician and pharmacist about the medications you take and determine if they increase your risk for sunburn!
- Insect repellents such as DEET, picaridin and permethrin may be used on children older than 2 months of age. Oil of lemon eucalyptus is not recommended on children under 3 years of age.
- Do not spray insect repellents on the face since they may irritate the eyes and mouth. Instead, spray onto hands and then rub onto the face. Avoid applying repellents to broken skin or wounds, and avoid applying repellents under clothing.

Do not take chances by waiting until symptoms. If an exposure occurs, 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," said Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the NJ Poison Center. "Having a poison expert give you exact instructions for your specific situation can help significantly during those critical first few minutes."

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

Remember, calls are free and confidential and help is always available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year, even during bouts of Mother Nature like Hurricane Sandy. Call 800-222-1222, chat via www.njpies.org, or text in at 8002221222@njpies.org to contact a NJ Poison Expert. Help is available in more than 150 languages.

We are social. Join us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc. Share what you learn with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

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 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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