

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

MEDIA ALERT

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

Poisoning Injuries and Deaths are Preventable -- National Poison Prevention Week 2015 --

Steven Marcus, 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) – March 2, 2015 — Each day, 55 children are exposed to potentially poisonous substances and a loved one calls the experts at the NJ Poison Center for help. Last year almost 20,000 children under the age of five (5) required assistance from the NJ Poison Experts because they were exposed to potentially dangerous items such as household chemicals, medicines and vitamins, cigars/cigarettes, liquid nicotine in e-cigarette devices and hookah pipes, coins, magnets, and batteries.

While most of the cases were managed at home without a visit to the hospital, many did require admission to an intensive care unit and some required surgery. Some people think only medicines and chemicals cause life threatening poisoning situations, however, foreign bodies such as coins, magnets, and batteries should never be overlooked because they can cause serious injury and even death.

"We have all been guilty of carelessly leaving potentially harmful items around the house, while they should have been kept in lockable medicine/storage cabinets," said Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the NJ Poison Center. "Overlooking such items, unfortunately, can be very costly to the health and well-being of a family member." Unintentional poisoning injury and death are preventable. Locking up such items will help prevent an exposure of a young child or pet, as well as, prevent the misuse of medicines.

"I would like to call your attention to the annual observance of National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW), this year from March 15-21st. As we approach spring, I ask all New Jerseyans to mark the occasion by "poison proofing" their homes when they spring clean. Go through the house room by room, including sheds and garages, and make sure potentially dangerous items are properly stored."

Don't forget about the unwanted, unused medications that may have accumulated in medicine cabinets, closets, and pantries. Take these items to your town's medication drop-off locations where they will be discarded safely. Remind any seniors you may know to do the same. If you would like help in finding a drop-off location near you, contact the poison center at 800-222-1222.

When the unthinkable happens, do you know who/where to call?

Fast, Free, Expert Medical Advice – Delivered Confidentially – Multilingual Capability. "We are here to help you!" said Dr. Marcus. The center is the state's primary defense against injury and death from poisoning. No matter the reason to call, all people from youngest to oldest are at risk for injury and death from poisonings, even pets. "There are no stupid questions. The only stupid questions are the ones not asked! It is a good idea to program our number (1-800-222-1222) into your cell phone. Ask your friends and family to do the same."

If you believe your child, pet, or anyone else has ingested something that could be harmful, call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222. If someone is unconscious, not breathing, seizing/convulsing, bleeding profusely, difficult to arouse/wake up, etc. call 911 immediately, otherwise call the poison center. A quick response by both the caller and the poison center expert can make a difference in preventing serious injury and saving lives. Every minute counts in poisoning situations so do not take chances by either waiting until symptoms occur or waste valuable time looking up information on the Internet.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

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. Stay tuned for more poison prevention week safety information.

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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