



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

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:

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

Aftermath of Hurricane Sandy

-- NJ Residents Getting Sick from Using Grills Indoors --

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

Available for Interviews

BREAKING NEWS: Serious illness reported to the NJ Poison Experts from using charcoal grills indoors to cook with or heat homes.

(Newark, NJ) – November 5, 2012 —Experts at the NJ Poison Center are warning residents against the use of charcoal grills in the home. Over the weekend, two (2) people were admitted to a NJ hospital after using a charcoal grill in the house for the purpose of either cooking with it or using it to heat their home. Both were suffering from significant carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. One resident was barely responsive when emergency services arrived; both adults required the use of hyperbaric oxygen.

According to Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Director of Drug Information and Professional Education of the NJ Poison Center, these were not the only 2 NJ residents that have required medical attention due to carbon monoxide poisoning from using gas generators or charcoal grills indoors or too close to the home since Hurricane Sandy touched down in the state last Monday. Dr. Ruck also reminds residents not to use gas powered generators in the home, garage or near an open window. The NJ Poison Experts have received several similar calls over the past week from around the state.

Portable gas powered generators flew off of the shelves over the past few days. Many new generator owners may not realize the potential dangers of the incorrect use of these units. These units produce high concentrations of carbon monoxide and if not properly placed or installed can cause carbon monoxide buildup and tragedy.

- Do not bring portable gas powered generators into the home or garage!
- Do not place portable gas powered generators outside near any open windows.

Portable heaters, stoves and lighting made for camping burn fuel and produce carbon monoxide:

- Do not use propane stoves or lights, kerosene camping stoves or charcoal grills into the house or garage
- Never cook with charcoal indoors.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, take immediate action:

- Call 911 immediately if your loved one is not breathing, unconscious/unresponsive, bleeding profusely, seizing/convulsing, etc.
- Exit the house/building immediately. Do not waste time opening windows to “air” it out; this will delay your escape and cause you to breathe in more possibly dangerous fumes.
- Contact your local fire department or gas company.
- Call the NJ Poison Experts, 800-222-1222, for immediate treatment advice. DO not waste time looking for information on the internet about carbon monoxide poisoning. Call us for fast, free and accurate information.

Safe Use/Storage of Gasoline

- Do not siphon gas from one place to another:
 - Swallowing gas and getting it into your lungs can cause significant injury.
- Do not store extra cans or jugs of gas in the home and only use approved gas containers:
 - In addition to being a fire hazard, gas fumes can cause someone to develop nausea vomiting and headaches.

Loss of Power to Refrigerator/Freezer

With the potential threat of power outages, it is important to be careful about food stored in refrigerators and freezers.

- Fill freezers to capacity, but refrigerators need room for air to circulate
- Refrigerators/freezers will sustain proper temperatures if not opened. Plan opening of either for as few times and as short a period of time as possible.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

Our Center is Fully Staffed and Prepared to Answer Your Questions throughout the Cleanup of Hurricane Sandy and any other future storms heading our way.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, or have questions about the safety of an item in your home, call the **NJ Poison Experts at (1-800-222-1222)**. They 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) 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. **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) 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 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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