



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

Designated regional poison center  
for New Jersey by New Jersey  
Department of Health and Senior  
Services and the American  
Association of Poison Control  
Centers

## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Caution this 4<sup>th</sup> of July: Torch Lamp Oil Mistaken for Apple Juice May Be Fatal

**Newark, NJ**-Last year right before the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday, six New Jersey residents became ill after ingesting a small amount of torch oil which was mistaken for apple juice. So far this year (2009), there have been fifteen (15) human exposure cases and one (1) non-human exposure case of lamp oil ingestion reported to the NJ Poison Control Center. In at least one of the recent cases, the lamp oil was mistaken for juice. Since January of 2008, there have been 50 reported exposures to the Poison Control Center. There have been similar outbreaks reported in other states as well. All totaled, hundreds of individuals have been exposed and several became ill from their experiences.

Last year, one individual, an elderly woman, died two days after mistaking the lamp oil for apple juice. An eight year old girl was hospitalized in critical condition and was placed on a ventilator after mistaking the torch oil for apple juice. This child survived her illness.

According to Bruce Ruck, PharmD. and Diane Calello, MD of NJ Poison Control Center, "Lamp oil refill bottles closely resemble juice containers. They are labeled not to drink, but the warning may not be read before it is too late. Further, it is difficult to pour the liquid directly from the bottle into the torch and frequently the user pours the liquid into a plastic or paper cup in order to then transfer it into the torch. This often leaves a cup with what appears to be lemonade or apple juice sitting in it, a dangerous invitation to disaster! When accidentally taken by mouth, such lamp oils can enter the lungs causing pneumonia and death.

"Jugs containing lamp oils must be stored in a locked cabinet away from the storage of food and drinks. **DO NOT use drinking cups to transfer torch lamp oil from the storage bottle to the torch.** This will help prevent some unintentional poisonings."

There are other poisonous products which look like and come in containers closely resembling juices. It is important for families to lock up all such potentially dangerous products, keep them far from food and educate the entire family on the dangers of these "look-a-likes." The NJPIES website contains a poster representation of other dangerous look-a-likes, it is found at [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org).

If you suspect a poisoning, call the Poison Control Center for immediate treatment advice as well as for prevention information. Call **1-800-222-1222**, trained medical professionals will provide you with the most up to date emergency treatment advice and will answer any drug or poison information question you may have.

**Remember, Help Is Just A Phone Call Away! Poison Emergency? Call 1-800-222-1222 Questions about Poisons?  
Call 1-800-222-1222 Questions about Poison Prevention? Call 1-800-222-1222**

**Hearing Impaired May Call 1-973-926-8008**

## For Press follow-up, please call 1-800-222-1222

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