

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

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Media can contact:

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

Family Friends and Food Safety – Don’t Gamble at the Dinner Table –

(Newark, NJ) Thanksgiving is a time for friends, family, and food! While preparing this year’s Thanksgiving feast, make sure to leave food poisoning off the menu. Whether you’re planning on hosting a house full of friends and family or having a small intimate celebration, it is important to remember that dangers lurk in the kitchen and home that can spoil the holiday.

“Forgetting about food safety is a recipe for disaster,” says Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Managing Director of the [NJ Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School’s Department of Emergency Medicine](#). Getting sick from eating contaminated food is quite common; contamination can occur at any point during the food production chain — from production to preparation (restaurant or home).¹

The CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) estimates that foodborne illnesses cause roughly 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people) to get sick each year.² Anyone can get sick from eating contaminated food, but certain groups such as young children, pregnant women, and those with weakened immune systems from medical conditions are more likely to get sick and develop a serious illness.

Quick facts about food poisoning.

- Food poisoning is preventable. Follow these [four simple steps](#): Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill
- Food poisoning can happen just a few hours after consuming contaminated food.
- Some symptoms are nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and fever.
- The effects of food poisoning are not always immediate and can range from mild to severe.
- Foodborne germs (bacteria, parasites, viruses) can grow very quickly in foods left at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Do not prepare food if you are feeling sick or have any type of respiratory illness or infection.

Food poisoning can be serious. If at any time during the preparing/cooking process you are uncertain of something or think a food poisoning situation may have occurred, don’t hesitate to get help. “Safety doesn’t take a break during the holidays and neither do the medical professionals at the New Jersey Poison Control Center,” says Ruck. “No question is too big or small; we are here 24/7 to provide expert medical advice and help in emergency situations.” Call, text, chat: 1-800-222-1222, [www.njpies.org](#)

Below are some common questions the NJ Poison Control Center receives on Thanksgiving.

- I cooked the turkey with the plastic on. Is it safe to eat?
- I ate stuffing cooked in the turkey. Will I get sick?
- My dog ate chocolate left on the table. What should I do?
- My 3-year-old swallowed two of my mother-in-law’s blood pressure pills. What should I do?

¹ CDC. [The Food Production Chain](#)

² CDC. [Food Safety](#)

It's never too early to start planning and preparing for holiday meals. Waiting until the last minute often causes people to take short cuts when it comes to safe food handling practices which puts their guests at risk for leaving the table with more than just full bellies. Every good meal should start with food safety; do not prepare food if you are feeling sick or have any type of respiratory illness or infection.

Poison control centers are a great resource for information and emergencies. Keep us at your fingertips. Save the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222) as a contact in your cell phone.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

We are social. Join us on Facebook ([@NJPIES](#)) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](#)) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc.

Real People. Real Answers.

Available for Media Interviews

Diane P. Calello, MD, Executive and Medical Director, New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

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

About NJPIES

Chartered in 1983, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System (NJPIES) is New Jersey's only poison control center. Medical professionals such as physicians, registered nurses and pharmacists offer free consultation through hotline services (telephone, text and chat) regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention, drugs, food poisoning, animal bites and more. In addition, it tracks incidences of adverse reactions to food, drugs and vaccines in order to monitor potential public health issues and provide data to the New Jersey Department of Health, U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. NJPIES' confidential services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. When needed, NJPIES responds to other emergent health issues by expanding hotline services.

NJPIES is designated as the state's regional poison control center by the New Jersey Department of Health and the American Association of Poison Control Centers. It is a division of the Department of Emergency Medicine of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located at Rutgers Health Sciences in Newark. NJPIES is funded, in part, by the NJ Department of Health, NJ Hospitals and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

New Jersey residents should save the Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222, in their mobile phones and post the number somewhere visible in their home. NJPIES is also available via text [8002221222@njpies.org](tel:8002221222) and chat www.njpies.org.
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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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