

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

NEWS RELEASE

Media to contact:
800-222-1222
800-962-1253 if outside NJ

For Immediate Release
March 14, 2019

Don't Guess, Make the Call

Poisons are More Common and Deadly Than You Think

(Newark, NJ) – Poisoning is the leading cause of injury death both in our state and across the county. Poisoning injury deaths now occur more often than car and firearm deaths. While most poisoning deaths occur from the misuse and abuse of legal and illegal drugs, poison exposures can involve any substance and occur anywhere, anytime to anyone. Avoid poisoning tragedies by making the call; **Call FAST to treat a poisoning - Call FIRST to prevent one, Poison Help line 1-800-222-1222.**

Each year, America's poison control centers band together during National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW); a national campaign to educate the public on the importance of preventing poisoning injuries, as well as, raising awareness of the life-saving services provided by all poison control centers. This year's observance will be celebrated during the week of March 17th.

Fact: Most exposures are reported from residences, but poison control centers also receive a significant number of calls from places of work, school, and outdoors. (90 percent in NJ)

Fact: Poison control centers manage most exposures over the phone, requiring no hospital visit or medical costs. (72 percent are managed at home in NJ)

Fact: Through the National Poison Data System (NPDS), America's poison control centers are among the most important tools the nation has for public health surveillance.

Fact: Doctors, nurses, pharmacists, emergency room staff, and other health care professionals call upon poison control center staff (specialized training) to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of their patients.

Fact: Data collected by poison control center specialists and uploaded to the National Poison Data System (NPDS) helps develop the most appropriate therapies to drugs never seen before. Poison control center data is uploaded to NPDS every 9.5 minutes.

Fact: In addition to life-saving services, poison control centers also have robust education departments both professional and public/community outreach.

The [NJ Poison Control Center](#) is committed to protecting and improving the health of New Jersey's residents by reducing the impact of poison and drug exposures. Last year, the poison center answered over 50,000 calls for help from residents across the state through the Poison Help number. "Our medical staff's expertise and immediate response help to eliminate thousands of unnecessary and expensive emergency department (ED) visits - reducing medical costs and lost productivity," Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D.,

Managing Director of the [NJ Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School's Department of Emergency Medicine](#). In addition, the poison center has an important role in the management and surveillance of drug overdose, misuse, and abuse, as well as, the ability to detect poison-related outbreaks and emergencies in real-time. "Our nation's poison centers are actively involved in all aspects of poisoning and the public's health; from prevention to treatment to community outreach."

Anything can be a poison if it's used in the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person; the dose determines how toxic something is or isn't in the body. "It's not just about medicines and chemicals/substances; it's also food poisoning, carbon monoxide, bites and stings, drug overdoses, plant exposures, and foreign bodies such as coins, magnets, and batteries also cause serious life-threatening injuries and even death," warns Ruck.

The poison center's education department is dedicated to taking an active role in community outreach across New Jersey; educating the public on the importance of preventing poison injuries and the vital role poison center services play in prevention and treatment. Staff is available to participate in educational programs, community events, health fairs, town hall meetings, festivals, corporate wellness events, etc. To request a representative, [click here](#).

The poison center reminds everyone that poisonings are easily preventable. We recommend you take the following simple and quick safety precautions.

- **Be prepared for an emergency.** Keep the national, free Poison Help line at your fingertips by saving the number in your mobile phone. **1-800-222-1222** | www.njpies.org (Chat/Text)
- **Practice safe storage habits.** Always store medicines, hazardous chemicals/substances and foreign bodies where children and pets cannot reach them. Keep them locked up, out of sight, reach and in their original child-resistant containers.
- **Read and follow all labels and directions.** Review medicine and product labels before use, especially before giving medicine to children.
- **Detect invisible threats.** Have a working carbon monoxide (CO) detector in your home. Check batteries two times a year during Daylight Savings. Don't forget your smoke alarm too.

Follow National Poison Prevention Week on social media at #PoisonHelp, #PreventPoison, and #NPPW19, like our [Facebook](#)/[Twitter](#) pages and save the Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222, as a contact in your phone.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

Stay Connected: 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 Control Center, Rutgers NJ Medical School's Department of Emergency Medicine

Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Managing Director, New Jersey Poison Control Center, Rutgers NJ Medical School's Department of Emergency Medicine

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 and chat www.njpies.org. Stay Connected: [FB](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Website](#)

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.

###