

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

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Sweltering Summer Temps Can Make You Sick Drug-Induced Hyperthermia Can Be Fatal During the Summer Heat

(Newark, NJ) – The potential for developing heat-related illness greatly increases as our state experiences prolonged bouts of excessive heat and humidity. Although residents go about their daily routines regardless of the unbearable heat, the poison control center warns that high heat and humidity can kill when the body is unable to regulate an extremely high internal temperature.

Hyperthermia (heat stroke) not only occurs when temperatures reach dangerous levels, but also from the use of certain therapeutic, recreational and illicit drugs. These drugs can prevent the body from cooling down through sweating. Too often this results in serious health complications – drug-induced fever and dehydration.

“Excessive heat combined with certain drugs like ecstasy (MDMA), cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin can be deadly,” says Diane Calello, MD, Executive and Medical Director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](#)’s Department of Emergency Medicine. “Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol can also mask the symptoms of overheating. But it’s not just illicit drugs. Certain medications, like antidepressants, antihistamines, diuretics, antipsychotics, and ADHD medications can also cause hyperthermia when taken during extremely hot and humid weather. When body temperatures rise to dangerous levels, the brain and body overheat resulting in an increased risk for health-related stroke or death.”

Although it might seem that heat stroke comes on suddenly, warning signs often appear early on. Know the symptoms, prevent a tragedy — abdominal cramps, muscle cramps, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, weakness, heavy sweat or a lack of sweat, confusion, odd behavior, irritability, delusions, hallucinations, seizures, and coma. Heat stroke is a medical emergency – it is critical that you act fast. “Think before taking drugs of any kind in the heat,” says Calello. “It might save your life.”

Every minute counts in poisoning situations – Do Not Guess! If you have questions, concerns or an emergency about something you ate, touched or smelled, immediately contact the medical professionals at the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#), 1-800-222-1222. You may call, [text](#), or

[chat](#) with our professionals for free, 24/7. Save the Poison Help line in your phone today to be prepared for what may happen tomorrow. It just may save you back!

If someone is unconscious, not breathing, hard to wake up, or seizing, call 9-1-1 immediately.

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

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About New Jersey Poison Control Center / 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. Stay Connected: [FB](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Website](#)

About Rutgers New Jersey Medical School

Founded in 1954, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School is the oldest school of medicine in the state. Today it is part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and graduates approximately 170 physicians a year. In addition to providing the MD degree, the school offers MD/PhD, MD/MPH and MD/MBA degrees through collaborations with other institutions of higher education. Dedicated to excellence in education, research, clinical care and community outreach, the medical school comprises 20 academic departments and works with several healthcare partners, including its principal teaching hospital, University Hospital. Its faculty consists of numerous world-renowned scientists and many of the region's "top doctors." Home to the nation's oldest student-run clinic, New Jersey Medical School hosts more than 50 centers and institutes, including the Public Health Research Institute Center, the Global Tuberculosis Institute and the Neurological Institute of New Jersey. For more information please visit: njms.rutgers.edu.