

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  
July 17, 2020

### Dangerous Summer Heat Can Make You Sick

**WARNING: An extremely hot weekend is forecasted for New Jersey. Use caution as high temperatures and humidity can cause dangerous and even fatal health consequences. If experiencing health effects, get medical attention immediately. Call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. If someone is unconscious, not breathing, hard to wake up, or seizing, call 9-1-1 immediately.**

**(New Jersey)** – Although most residents go about their daily routines regardless of the unbearable summer heat, the state’s poison control center warns that high heat and humidity can kill when the body is unable to regulate a high internal temperature. Prevent heat-related illnesses by staying cool, hydrated, and out of direct sun during the day.

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, 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.”

If you have questions, concerns, or an emergency regarding heat-related illnesses or other potentially dangerous exposure/injury, do not wait until symptoms occur or spend critical time

looking online. New Jersey residents can reach their poison control center by calling (1-800-222-1222), [texting](#) (973-339-0702), or [chatting](#) with our medical professionals for free, 24/7. Save the Poison Help line in your phone to be prepared for any situation. **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.**

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#### **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

Lewis S. Nelson, MD, Professor and Chair of Emergency Medicine at Rutgers NJ Medical School

#### **About New Jersey Poison Control Center / NJPIES, 1-800-222-1222**

Chartered in 1983, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System (NJPIES), known to the public as the New Jersey Poison Control Center, is the state's primary defense against injury and deaths from intentional and unintentional poisonings. It 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 at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located at Rutgers Biomedical and 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.

Hotline staff (physicians, registered nurses, and pharmacists) provide free, telemedicine consultation through hotline services (telephone, text, chat) regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention practices, drug interactions and overdoses, food poisoning, environmental chemical exposures, animal/insect bites and stings, plant and other outdoor exposures, carbon monoxide and lead poisonings, and more. NJPIES' services are free, confidential/private, available 24/7, and help is available in any language. Call 1-800-222-1222; Text 973-339-0702; [Chat](#). 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](http://njms.rutgers.edu).

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