

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 10, 2020

Intense Tropical Storm Expected Today

Poisoning Risk Significantly Increase with Flooding and Power Outages

WARNING: New Jersey is expecting severe weather today from Tropical Storm Fay — heavy rain, flooding and power outages to parts of the state. Intense storms not only bring the danger of fierce weather, but also put residents at increased risk for potentially serious health effects from, carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, medicine contamination/safety, food poisoning, medicine dosing errors, and mistaken identity mishaps.

Newark, NJ) – Every minute counts in poisoning situations – Do Not Guess! If you have questions or concerns about something you ate, touched or smelled, immediately contact the medical professionals at the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#). You may call (1-800-222-1222), [text](#) (973-339-0702), or [chat](#) with our 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.**

"Carbon monoxide poisoning is an immediate and deadly danger no matter the season and especially after bad weather," says Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., managing director of the New Jersey Poison Control Center at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, Department of Emergency Medicine](#). "Don't be the poison center's next statistic, act fast if you suspect CO poisoning. Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that gives no warning – you can't see it, smell it or taste it."

Besides, carbon monoxide poisoning, residents are at risk for other poisoning injuries. Flooding in homes can contaminate food, drinking water, and medicines. Power outages often lead to medicine dosing errors and mistaken identity mishaps which can result in serious health effects. Food in refrigerators and freezers can spoil leaving people at risk for food poisoning.

If you suspect a poisoning exposure/injury has occurred, do not wait until symptoms occur or spend critical time looking online. Call your poison control center for immediate help, 1-800-222-1222.

Safety tips to help reduce your risk of carbon monoxide exposure during summer storms:

1. Only use generators outside. Keep them more than 20 feet from both you and your neighbor's home, doors, windows, and open garages.
2. Do not bring generators, pressure washers, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside your home, basement, garage, carport, camper, boat cabin, or tent – or even outside near an open window or door.
3. Test carbon monoxide detectors to make sure they are working. If detectors have batteries, check to make sure they are good. Plug-in CO detectors should have battery backups in case the power goes out. Check to make sure.
4. Do not remove the batteries from detectors to use somewhere else. The detector can only save lives if it works!

5. Do not cook with charcoal indoors.
6. Do not idle a car in a closed garage. Once you pull in, immediately turn off the engine. Be extra careful with "remote start" engines which may be on without your knowledge.

If you suspect a carbon monoxide exposure, take immediate action:

1. If someone is unconscious or unresponsive, get him or her out of the house and call 9-1-1 immediately.
2. Exit the house/building immediately. Do not waste time opening windows. This will delay your escape and cause you to breathe in even more dangerous fumes.
3. Contact your local fire department/energy provider.
4. Call the New Jersey Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 for immediate medical treatment advice. Do not waste time looking for information on the internet about carbon monoxide poisoning. Call us for fast, free and accurate information.

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

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.