

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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Halloween 2020 in New Jersey Our New Normal Mixed with the Same Potential Poisoning Hazards

(New Jersey) – This year’s Halloween activities will be anything but traditional. As we prepare to celebrate Halloween during our “new normal”, we must not forget that COVID-19 cases continue to increase across New Jersey. The rise in positive cases means there is significant spread of the virus in our communities.

It’s important to plan [safer ways](#) to celebrate Halloween activities this year. Wear a cloth or disposable face mask that covers your mouth and nose while participating in activities. Costume masks must not replace face masks. Avoiding gatherings/crowds, close contact with others that are not part of your household (do not live with), and activities in closed spaces (indoor) will help lessen the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Not only will these actions lessen the spread of COVID-19, they will also lessen the spread of influenza (seasonal flu).

“Although COVID-19 brings about new public health concerns for this year’s Halloween celebrations, we must not forget the existing concerns of poison control centers around the country,” 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](#). “Halloween is a busy time of year for the healthcare professionals at your local poison control center. Potential poisoning risks go beyond the fear of tampered candy. Our staff gets calls throughout the night about many things – from glow sticks to allergic reactions to belly aches to marijuana edibles to chemical burns to alcohol poisoning.”

Parents often call 9-1-1 or spend hours in the emergency room when they could have simply called their local poison control center for immediate medical treatment advice and stayed home. Calling your poison control center, 1-800-222-1222, is always the fastest way to get the medical help or information you need to prevent further injury.

Be aware that Halloween candy can poison your pet. You must keep chocolate, cocoa, candy and anything sugarless (contains artificial sweetener like Xylitol) out of their sight and reach. If any of these items are swallowed, get help fast. These products can be toxic causing vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, or even death depending on the item and the amount that was swallowed (dose).

If planning to drink alcohol during Halloween celebrations, make sure children and pets don’t get into the alcoholic beverages. The alcohol content in beer, wine, liquor, and cocktails/punches affects children and pets much differently than it does adults. Even ingesting a small amount of alcohol can lead to serious health problems and even death.

Teens and young adults often overindulge without realizing they have consumed too much alcohol. A person who appears to be very drunk or has passed out may be showing early signs of alcohol poisoning and be in real danger. Immediate medical help is essential. "Sleeping it off" is never a safe option. It's important to know the [critical signs](#) of alcohol poisoning.

Although mishaps can occur at any time, the hectic nature of Halloween increases the risk for accidental poisoning injuries to trick-or-treaters and their families. The New Jersey Poison Control Center offers safety tips for a fun, safe, and healthy night of trick-or-treating. [Watch our safety video](#)

New Jersey residents can reach their local poison control center, 24/7: Call (1-800-222-1222); Text (973-339-0702); Chat via [website](#). If someone is unconscious, not breathing, hard to wake up, or having a seizure, call 9-1-1. Contact the NJ Poison Control Center for questions, emergencies, and information regarding any potential poisoning exposure.

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

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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.

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