

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

NEWS RELEASE

Media to contact:
800-222-1222

For Immediate Release
June 28, 2021

Celebrate 4th of July Safely Prevent Common Poison-Related Mishaps

(New Jersey) — Summer is in full swing across the Garden State — kids are out of school, pools are open and residents and visitors are busy prepping for fun-filled 4th of July celebrations like backyard barbeques, beach days, weekend camping, and family gatherings. Although summer holidays are always packed with excitement and fun, this holiday carries a bit more anticipation as it's the first holiday to be celebrated without COVID restrictions. As you put the final touches on holiday plans, don't overlook common seasonal hazards that can that quickly turn a celebration into a mishap.

"Accidental poisoning exposures and injuries related to summer occur across New Jersey at home, while on vacation and during recreational activities," says Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, Department of Emergency Medicine](#). "They are more likely to happen when we're busy and preoccupied or when we're unfamiliar with our settings."

The NJ Poison Control Center sees a spike in calls during the summer, especially around holiday weekends, concerning torch oil, bug sprays, alcohol, food poisoning, poisonous plants, glow products, and fireworks. "The hectic nature surrounding large celebrations is often the perfect setting for poison-related mishaps that may otherwise have been prevented," says Calello.

The poison center reminds the public to remember to pay attention to what's happening around them. There are products and items we come in contact within our day-to-day environments that could cause an accidental poisoning if used in the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person. These mishaps happen quickly and often right under our noses.

"Whether staying home and entertaining guests, heading out on the water or, spending a day at the beach, know that our poison center's medical experts are available for immediate help throughout the holiday weekend," says Calello.

Although poison exposures occur at any time of year, there are specific poison exposures that may be more likely to occur during the summer months. When planning your holiday weekend and the rest of your summer vacation, keep the following tips in mind and keep the poison center phone number in your phone to take with you wherever you go.

- Food Safety:
 - Prevent food poisoning. Raw foods can be contaminated with bacteria, viruses and parasites which can cause severe illness (food poisoning). Wash hands with soap and water before and after handling raw food.
 - Do not let meats, fish, poultry and salads made with mayonnaise or egg stay outside of the refrigerator for more than two hours.

- Grill Safety:
 - Gas and charcoal grills can produce high levels of carbon monoxide. Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning — do not use these appliances indoors or in enclosed areas.
 - Keep charcoal and lighter fluids locked up and out of reach of children and pets. Not only can these items cause external physical damage, they can cause serious illness and injury if swallowed.

- Backyard Safety:
 - It's never safe to pick or eat plants/mushrooms growing in the wild, even those you find in your own yard. People suffer serious health effects and even die each year from mushroom poisoning.
 - Be on the lookout for poison ivy, oak, and sumac when spending time outdoors. When touched, the oils from these poisonous plants cause a mild to severe itchy rash – blisters, swelling, and redness.
 - Fluids used in backyard torches and lamps can often resemble juice containers, most commonly apple juice. Mistaken identity and accidental mishaps happen often in children and pets. Swallowing such products can lead to serious poisoning and even death.

- Celebration Safety:
 - Don't leave adult recreational products lying around. Lock these products up to protect children and pets. Cigarette butts, alcohol, liquid nicotine/vaping devices, and THC-containing products including edibles, can be poisonous to children and pets if swallowed. Swallowing a small amount can cause severe health effects, including death.
 - Drinking alcoholic beverages while taking medicine is dangerous. Many ingredients used in medicines can interact dangerously with alcohol, even if the medicine and alcohol were not ingested at the same time.
 - Fireworks are not only dangerous if used incorrectly, but they can also cause serious injury or poisoning if ingested. These items should be kept in their original packaging with label intact. Children and pets are curious and can easily swallow fireworks left on the ground. Even used fireworks can cause serious injury.

If you have questions, concerns or an emergency regarding a poisoning exposure, contact the medical professionals at your local poison control center, 1-800-222-1222. Do not wait until symptoms occur or

spend critical time looking for medical information online. Get the immediate medical help you or a loved one needs.

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

New Jersey residents can reach their poison center in the following ways: Call the Poison Help Hotline (1-800-222-1222), Text (973-339-0702), or [Chat](#) through the Poison Center's website. Stay connected on social: [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#)

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

Real People. Real Answers.

Available for Media Interviews

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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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