

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

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### Halloween Mishaps

Some Potential Poisons Can Look Like Candy

#### Poison Control Center Cases:

- 1. Two-year-old child accidentally ate some of dad's marijuana edibles without anyone noticing. The dad only realized something was wrong when the child became extremely tired and unsteady while walking. The child was admitted to an emergency room for observation and did well after spending 24-hours in the hospital.**
- 2. A babysitter contacted the NJ Poison Control Center after realizing that marijuana edibles from her purse had gone missing. On the way to the emergency room the toddler developed seizures and was admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) for treatment and observation.**

**Poison center experts and other health and safety officials understand that it is highly unlikely someone would intentionally give out marijuana edibles to children on Halloween. What's more likely to happen, especially with Halloween candy and edibles around homes, is a child accidentally finds and eats an edible thinking it is candy meant for trick-or-treating. Keeping edibles locked up, out of sight and reach of children and pets will prevent accidental exposure to edibles.**

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(New Jersey) – Although Halloween is a time filled with exciting and fun activities, it's a busy time for everyone, including the state's poison control center. With people preoccupied preparing for school parades, parties, and trunk/trick-or-treating, paying attention to what's happening around them can be hard. It's important to remember potential poisons hide in plain sight in our everyday environments.

Any product or substance – legal or illegal - can be poisonous if used in the wrong way, the wrong amount (dose), or by the wrong person.

"Halloween-related mishaps and accidents involving potential poisons go beyond the fear of contaminated candy," says Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](#). "Our medical professionals get calls throughout the night about many things — from glow sticks to face paint; allergic reactions to food poisoning; belly aches to marijuana edibles; and chemical burns to alcohol poisoning."

The state's poison control center is on alert each October because of the increased risk of mistaking potentially dangerous products for Halloween candy at home. These products can fool anyone, not just kids and pets. Prescription and over-the-counter (non-prescription) medicines are not the only products easily confused with candy. Edible marijuana products can be confusing as they look like candy and other sweets that do not contain THC (the active substance in marijuana that makes a person feel "high").

If you have marijuana edibles at home, keep them locked up to prevent children and pets from accidentally ingesting them. For the fourth year in a row, the NJ Poison Control Center has seen an [increase](#) in calls concerning kids accidentally exposed to edibles at home.

If planning a party, make sure children and pets don't get into alcoholic beverages. The amount of alcohol in beer, wine, liquor, and cocktails/punches affects children and pets differently than adults. Even swallowing a small amount of alcohol can cause serious health effects and death.

It's easy to overindulge without realizing you've 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.

Pets are not only at risk of alcohol poisoning, they're also at risk of poisoning from candies, chocolates, and other [Halloween-related items](#). Chocolate, cocoa, candy, and anything sugarless can be poisonous to pets. [Artificial sweeteners](#) like xylitol can cause severe illness if pets eat products containing this ingredient. Keep dangerous products up high and out of sight and reach of pets. If any of these items are swallowed, get help fast.

When a mishap occurs involving a potentially dangerous product or substance, many people call 9-1-1 or spend hours in the emergency room when they could have gotten the help they needed over the phone from their local poison control center. Calling the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222 is always the fastest way to get the medical help or information you need to prevent further injury.

Safety tips for a fun and safe Halloween celebration – [safety video](#)

- Avoid homemade treats when trick-or-treating.
- Teach kids that medicine is not candy. Lock up medicines to prevent accidental poisoning.
- Use non-toxic makeup to paint faces and body parts. Test on a small area of skin to be sure it will not cause an allergic reaction.
- Dry ice can cause severe burns and frostbite if it touches the skin or is swallowed. Use gloves to protect your skin.

- Look out for potentially dangerous products that look like candy.

If you think someone came in contact with something dangerous, contact your local poison control center immediately. Medical specialists are available to provide information, answer questions, and provide emergency support 24 hours a day. Anyone can call for medical help – children, teens, and adults. Poison control centers are a medical resource for both the public and healthcare providers.

**Call the NJ Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 or [Chat Here](#)**

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



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#### **Available for Media Interviews**

Diane P. Calello, MD, Executive and Medical Director, New Jersey Poison Control Center, Department of Emergency Medicine, Rutgers NJ Medical School

Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Managing Director, New Jersey Poison Control Center, Department of Emergency Medicine, Rutgers NJ Medical School

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 or [Chat Here](#). Stay Connected: [FB](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Instagram](#) / [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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