

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

### **Poison Centers: Here for the Ages** National Poison Prevention Week 2022

**(New Jersey)** – The New Jersey Poison Control Center and poison control centers around the country are celebrating National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW), observed March 20-26<sup>th</sup>. This week is dedicated to promoting the importance of recognizing accidental poisoning risks, preventing injuries and raising awareness about the life-saving services the nation’s network of 55 poison control centers provide to callers on the Poison Help Hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

“When life happens, calling your local poison control center for help can make a difference between a mild health effect and a serious one,” says Bruce Ruck, managing director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, Department of Emergency Medicine](#).

“Our medical staff’s expertise and immediate response provides callers with the medical help they need, right at home. Most callers never need to go to the emergency room or spend money on medical costs.”

As National Poison Prevention Week nears, help promote the importance of contacting your local poison control center if you or a loved one had contact with a potentially dangerous product or substance. Guessing whether it’s a medical emergency, waiting for symptoms to appear or wasting time searching for medical information online can delay medical treatment and lead to more severe health effects.

Encourage family, staff, co-workers, friends, patients and constituents to save the Poison Help Hotline (1-800-222-1222) in their phones — you just may save a life. The Poison Help Hotline is available anywhere in the U.S. and connects callers to their local poison control center. Toxicology specialists including nurses, pharmacists and physicians provide callers with free, private/confidential, medical advice, 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Along with helping the public, poison control center staff regularly consults with medical and emergency service providers in hospital emergency departments and healthcare facilities across the state to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. Studies show patients hospitalized after a poisoning exposure with poison center assistance spend fewer days in the hospital than patients hospitalized without poison center assistance.

In addition to being New Jersey’s primary defense against injury and death from unintentional poisoning, the poison control center continues to play an essential role in the statewide response to the COVID-19 pandemic — assisting over 125,000 callers with COVID-19 information and resources.

“When the public first thinks of a poison control center, many believe our services only apply to little ones who get into cleaners under the sink or older adults who mixed-up their medicines,” says Ruck.

“In fact, each day our center helps callers of all ages, in many languages and for all types of poisoning exposures. Mishaps often involve common products found in our everyday environments besides medicines and chemicals.”

Other risks include recreational drugs (cannabis edibles, vape liquids and alcohol), food poisoning, bites and stings, carbon monoxide, medication/substance overdose, toxic plants, and foreign bodies (coins, magnets and batteries).

Help promote National Poison Prevention Week – March 20-26, 2022. [Click here](#) for sharable resources and on-demand virtual events. There’s something for everyone! Follow along on social media using **#NPPW22**.

The poison center’s education department is dedicated to taking an active role in community outreach across New Jersey. We’re available to provide poison safety programs, prevention education materials and attend community events. [Submit Requests Here](#) for community programs and education materials.

If you think someone came in contact with something dangerous, contact your local poison control center immediately for medical treatment advice. Anyone can call for medical help – children, teens and adults. Poison control centers are a medical resource for both the public and healthcare providers. Get help 24/7.

**If the person is awake, call the NJ Poison Control Center 1-800-222-1222 or [Chat Here](#)**

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



---

**Available for Media Interviews**

Diane 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, 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).

###