

The New Jersey Poison Control Center — Serving New Jersey Since 1983

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Media to contact:

800-222-1222 | 800-962-1253 (outside NJ)

Tips for a Safe Start to Summer

(New Jersey) – Sunburn, unsafe swimming, and sweltering temperatures are not the only health concerns people may experience during summer. At home or on vacation, indoor or outdoor, rain or shine, everyday items can quickly become dangerous.

“Mishaps are more likely to happen when there are changes in daily routines or distractions,” says Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](#). “Poison control centers see an increase in exposure to potentially dangerous items and substances during warm-weather months and holidays.”

If you’re away from home, pay attention to new surroundings. Mistakes and accidents often happen in plain sight. Anything used in the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person can cause accidental poisoning. Health effects may range from minor to severe illness and death.

“The more time people spend in one place, the more likely they are to overlook potential hazards, including recreational substances like alcohol, vape products, and marijuana edibles,” says Calello.

The NJ Poison Control Center provides information and medical treatment advice to people of all ages for potentially dangerous exposures to common summer hazards — alcohol, plants, sunburn, wild mushrooms, bites and stings, insect spray, carbon monoxide, and food poisoning.

Follow these safety tips to prevent accidental exposures.

Adult Recreational Products

- Don’t leave adult recreational products including liquid nicotine/vapes and marijuana edibles lying around. It’s safest to lock these products up to prevent children and pets from accidentally swallowing them. Mishaps involving adult recreational products can cause serious injury.

Food Poisoning:

- Raw foods can be contaminated with bacteria, viruses, and parasites which can cause severe illness. 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. If it's 90 degrees or warmer, perishable foods should be refrigerated within one hour.

Grills:

- Gas and charcoal grills can produce high levels of carbon monoxide. Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning — do not use grills indoors or in enclosed areas (garage, basement, shed, RV/ camper, boat cabin).
- Keep charcoal and lighter fluids locked up and out of reach of children and pets. Not only can these items cause physical damage, they can cause serious illness and injury if swallowed.

Backyard:

- It's never safe to pick or eat plants and mushrooms growing in the wild, even those you find in your own yard. People suffer serious illness and death 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. Do not burn these plants. Inhaling the smoke can cause serious lung injury.
- Fluids used in backyard torches and lamps often resemble juice containers (commonly apple juice). Accidental mishaps involving these products can lead to serious injury if swallowed.

Other Dangers:

- Drinking alcoholic beverages while taking medicine is dangerous. Dangerous interactions can occur, even if the medicine and alcohol were not ingested at the same time.
- Fireworks can also cause serious injury or poisoning if ingested by children and pets. Locking them up is the safest way to prevent a mishap. Quickly pick up fireworks left on the ground.

If you think someone has come 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 — [NJPoisonCenter.org](https://www.njpoisoncenter.org)

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

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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](#).

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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