

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)

### **Rise in Cases of Young Kids Accidentally Exposed to Vape Liquid**

NJ Poison Control Center Warns of Potential Danger

(New Jersey) - Liquid nicotine used in vape and e-cigarette devices (also called e-liquids, e-juice, vape juice) are especially dangerous to children if they accidentally drink the liquid. Because the concentration of nicotine is higher in e-liquids than in other tobacco products, a child only needs to be exposed to a small amount of liquid to cause potentially life-threatening health effects. Some devices/cartridges can contain the amount of nicotine in more than one pack of cigarettes. Symptoms of nicotine exposure may include dizziness, nausea, vomiting, fast heartbeat, and high blood pressure. Severe poisoning can cause seizures and death.

"Young children are drawn to the bright colors and sweet smells of liquid nicotine products making them a danger that hides in plain sight," says Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](http://NJPoisonCenter.org) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](http://RutgersNewJerseyMedicalSchool.edu). "Since these devices are common everyday products, it's easy to forget that they contain a potentially toxic substance. The best way to prevent an accidental exposure to nicotine is to make sure your kids can't get access to vaping devices or refill cartridges/bottles."

Calls to the New Jersey Poison Control Center for vape-related nicotine exposures have increased since 2021 with the majority of cases involving children 5 years old and younger. As of August 2023, the center's specialists have assisted in the medical treatment of 86 children total (up to age 19) — 79 of the cases involved children 5 years old and younger. Total cases doubled from 42 children in 2021 to 84 children in 2022.

Parents of young children, even if they do not vape, need to be aware that these products may be brought into their homes without them knowing by older siblings, relatives, babysitters, house guests, and other visitors. These devices are commonly designed to look like everyday items including [school supplies](#) — drinks, pens, highlighters, USB drives, smart watches, [toys](#), phone cases, hoodies, backpacks, and more.

"We want to remind anyone who vapes to be aware of where they keep their liquid nicotine products. If these products are left out and easy to reach, chances are children and pets will find them," says Calello.

Like children, [pets](#) are at high risk of accidental exposure to vape products and can suffer life-threatening health effects in a short amount of time.

Safe storage is key. Liquid nicotine devices are often carried around and can be found in places in and out of the home. Don't underestimate a child or pet's ability to get into things that are dangerous. You can't rely on child-resistant packaging to prevent exposures. Child resistant packaging is only meant to slow a child down from opening a product — it does not mean the product is child-proof.

Do not leave liquid nicotine products out in plain sight — counter, nightstand, drawer, jacket/sweatshirts, purse/bags, and car. The safest option is to keep devices and their refill cartridges/bottles in a secured location (locked up) when you're done using them. If that's not possible, store them up high and out of sight and reach of children and pets. Be mindful not to vape in front of children or mention that the flavored liquids taste good because children are likely to imitate what they see.

If you think a child consumed any amount of liquid nicotine, contact the New Jersey Poison Control Center immediately for medical treatment advice. Poison control centers are a medical resource for both the public and healthcare professionals. Get help 24/7. Call 1-800-222-1222 or [Chat Here](#). If someone is not breathing, hard to wake up, or having a seizure, call 9-1-1.

---

---

Stay Connected: [FB](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Instagram](#) / [TikTok](#) / [YouTube](#) / [Website](#)

**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 Health 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](http://njms.rutgers.edu).

###