

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

HEALTH ADVISORY

Be Aware of Hidden Summer Dangers

Safety Tips to Prevent Accidental Exposures and Injuries

Each summer, the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](http://NJPoisonCenter.org) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](http://RutgersNewJerseyMedicalSchool.edu) receives an increase in calls related to seasonal hazards. Beyond sunburns and heat-related illnesses, everyday items at home or on vacation can quickly become dangerous. When away from home, remember to pay close attention to your new surroundings. Mistakes and accidents often happen when there are changes in daily routines or distractions.

"Many summer hazards hide in plain sight, sadly leading to an increased number of potentially dangerous exposures," says Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the New Jersey Poison Control Center at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. "With more people likely to purchase alcoholic beverages in the summer, we're concerned about the increased risk of children accidentally drinking alcohol. Children are extremely sensitive to the poisonous effects of alcohol, and can suffer life-threatening symptoms."

Beverage companies producing nonalcoholic drinks such as SUNNYD, Mountain Dew, Arizona, Simply, and Dunkin' also market "hard" or "spiked" seltzers and products to adult consumers. The labels do indicate the alcohol content, though some consumers may still be unaware. Always read labels carefully to distinguish between alcoholic and nonalcoholic products from the same brand.

To prevent accidental exposures and emergency room visits, the New Jersey Poison Control Center offers the following summer safety tips:

Adult Recreational Products

- Keep alcoholic drinks separate from nonalcoholic ones to prevent confusion whether on shelves or in coolers.
- Lock up products such as liquid nicotine, vapes and marijuana edibles to prevent children and pets from accidental ingestion, which can cause serious injury.

Food Poisoning

- Wash hands before and after handling raw food.
- Refrigerate meats, fish, poultry and mayonnaise-based salads within two hours (one hour if 90 degrees or warmer).
- Be cautious with food from festivals or food trucks; avoid eating if food is left out too long.

Grills

- Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning by not using grills indoors or in enclosed areas, such as garages, basements, sheds, campers and boat cabins.

- Lock up charcoal and lighter fluids to prevent accidental ingestion by children and pets.

Backyard

- Avoid picking or eating wild plants and mushrooms; they can cause serious illness or death.
- Be aware of poison ivy, oak and sumac; their oils cause itchy rashes and shouldn't be burned.
- Store torch and lamp fluids safely, as they resemble apple juice containers and can be dangerous if swallowed.

Other Dangers

- Avoid mixing alcohol with medicine; dangerous interactions can occur.
- Pick up used fireworks immediately; they can cause injury if ingested by children or pets.

If you think someone came in contact with something dangerous, contact the New Jersey Poison Control Center immediately for medical treatment advice. Anyone can call for help – children, teens, and adults. 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.

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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 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.

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