



New School Year Brings Concerns About Exposure to Potential Poisons

Back to School



The start of the school year is a frantic time for families and teachers, getting back on schedule and navigating the morning rush – a time when people might not be paying attention to situations where unintentional poisonings could occur.

“September is not only a busy time for families and school employees, it’s also a busy time for us at the poison center,” said Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](#).

“Potentially dangerous products are commonly found in our everyday environments and often go unnoticed until a mishap occurs. Situations can become dangerous quickly and without warning depending on the dose of a product.”

SAFETY AT HOME AND SCHOOL

Changes in daily routines cause stress and distractions

As with households, classrooms contain substances that are harmful if ingested or used incorrectly, including medicines, cleaning chemicals and disinfectants, look-alike products, school and craft supplies, hand sanitizers, food, disc batteries and small magnets.



“When you combine distraction with easy access and unsafe storage of potentially harmful products, mishaps are likely to happen,” said Calello.

“Every day, people of all ages are exposed to potentially dangerous items ranging from medicines and chemicals to adult recreational products and substances of abuse.”



1-800-222-1222



When it comes to giving medicine to children, parents and caregivers should have a clear understanding as to what medicine a child needs, when and how much needs to be given and who is responsible for giving the medicine.

Calling the poison control center (800-222-1222) first for medical guidance and care, including determining if any further medical

action is needed, can make a difference between a mild health effect and a more serious one, which may result in a trip to the hospital, Calello adds.

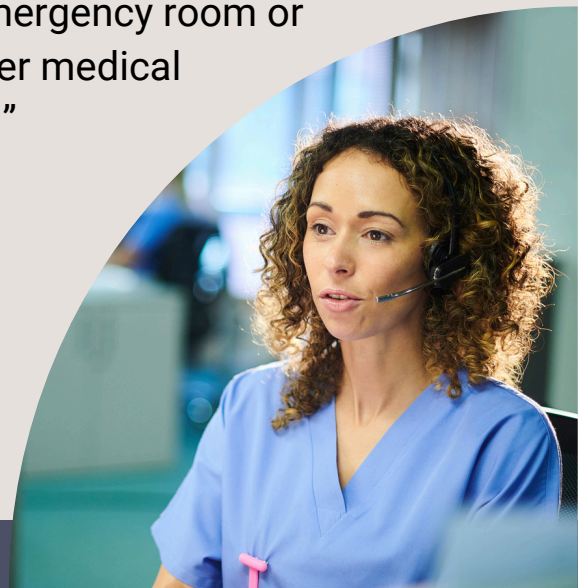
While some calls to the poison center are fairly routine, others involving prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and supplements, highly caffeinated energy drinks, and adult recreational drugs including vape liquids, cannabis edibles and alcohol can be quite complicated and result in serious side effects.

Younger children are not the only ones at risk for poisonings.

Social media challenges, bullying and look-alike products can pose serious health risks for older children and teens. Potentially dangerous situations can include inhaling toxic fumes from a spray

can for a challenge, taking a large doses of an over-the-counter pain reliever to harm oneself, mistakenly eating cannabis edibles thought to be candy, or taking fake prescription pills from a friend or bought online.

“The poison center is not only a trusted medical resource for parents and caregivers, but also school administrators, teachers, and nurses,” said Calello. “With the poison center’s help, most people don’t have to go to the emergency room or seek other medical services.”



Follow these safety tips to prevent children of all ages from coming in contact with potential poisons at home and school.

MEDICINE



Keep track of medicines in the home to prevent accidental exposure, misuse, or abuse.



Both prescription and over-the-counter medicines should be locked up after every use to ensure they are not accidentally or intentionally ingested or stolen.



When giving a child more than one medicine, make sure the medicines do not have the same active ingredients. Only give young children medicine formulated for children.



Measure liquid medicine with an oral syringe or medicine spoon, cup or dropper. Never use a kitchen soup spoon because it is not a true measure for a teaspoon or tablespoon.



1-800-222-1222



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EVERYDAY PRODUCTS AND SUBSTANCES

Store all medicines, household cleaners, and adult recreational substances such as alcohol or cannabis edibles in their original containers and in secure or locked areas.

These products can cause serious side effects in children. Cannabis edibles can be mistaken for candy and other food products.

Read warnings and follow the directions on product labels. Avoid using multiple cleaners at the same time as the combination of ingredients can cause toxic fumes.



HAND SANITIZERS



Hand sanitizers can be dangerous if enough is swallowed. Young children should have limited, monitored access to hand sanitizer. Don't keep it in their backpacks or lunch bags.



1-800-222-1222



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FOOD SAFETY



Pack lunch foods in insulated containers to prevent food from spoiling and causing illness. Keep hot foods hot by using thermoses and other insulated containers. Cold food should be kept cold by using ice packs or cooling bags.



SUPPLIES

School supplies should be non-toxic and kept in their original containers, whether provided by the school or brought in by students and parents. Look for the AP (Approved Product) seal from ACMI (Art and Creative Materials Institute) on the packaging which certifies products to be non-toxic and safe for kids.



1-800-222-1222



HAND WASHING



Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before touching food and after interacting with others to prevent illnesses. Wash food preparation surfaces.



OUTDOOR POISONS

Watch children outdoors. Many potential poisons hide in plain sight, including toxic wild mushrooms, lawn and garden chemicals, pest control products and poisonous plants like poison ivy and poison hemlock.



WAIT THERE'S MORE!



For more information on safely using cleaning chemicals in the classroom, visit [here](#)



1-800-222-1222



**New
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Poison
Center**



**Get Free
Medical Help**
1-800-222-1222

**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**

[NJPoisonCenter.org](https://www.njpoisoncenter.org)

NJ Poison Control Center
is a medical resource for
both the public and
healthcare providers.

If you think someone came
in contact with something
dangerous, contact the
New Jersey Poison Control
Center immediately.

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