

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

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Prevention is the Strongest Antidote for Poisoning

The New Jersey Poison Control Center Urges Implementing Poison Safety Practices at Home During National Poison Prevention Week

Every day, the nation's 54 poison control centers provide callers of all ages with life-saving information, guidance, and medical care regarding exposures to harmful or potentially harmful products and substances with medical outcomes ranging from minor to severe. Whether it's a question or an emergency, calling a poison center is faster and more accurate than an internet search. More than 70% of people who call the Poison Help Line (1-800-222-1222) get the help they need right where they are — saving the cost of a trip to a healthcare professional or hospital.

The New Jersey Poison Control Center joins poison centers nationwide in celebrating National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW), observed this year on March 16 to 22. This week is dedicated to promoting the importance of recognizing accidental poisoning risks, preventing injuries, establishing home safety practices, and raising community awareness about the valuable services provided by U.S. Poison Control Centers.

"As poisonings continue to be a leading cause of death and injury in New Jersey and across the country, it's important to recognize that the majority of poisonings happen in homes and involve common everyday products from over-the-counter medicines and supplements to prescription drugs, and household cleaners and chemicals to cosmetic/personal care products," said Bruce Ruck, managing director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](#).

"People of all ages are at risk of poisoning when you combine accessibility with storage practices that are not safe enough," Ruck said. "This is especially true with medicines as they are readily available in homes, while visiting friends and family, and online. Medicines not monitored and not kept in lockable areas often lead to accidental poisonings, overdose, and abuse. Medicines may also be purposefully misused in suicide attempts."

Poisonings don't always have early warning signs. When the unexpected happens, and you're unsure about potential dangers or whether you should visit an emergency room, call the New Jersey Poison Control Center for medical help before doing anything. The expertise and guidance provided by the center's toxicology specialists, including nurses, pharmacists, and doctors, help quickly address the situation, giving a caller peace of mind while providing medical care.

Although accidents and mishaps occur, they can usually be avoided by following simple safety practices. The New Jersey Poison Control Center recommends the following safety tips to prevent poisonings at home.

- Keep medicines and household products in their original containers and away from food items.
- Read the labels on all medicines and household products carefully and follow their directions and warnings.
- If using liquid medicine, measure the amount of medicine with a dosing tool – dropper, syringe, medicine cup or dosing spoon. Do not use a kitchen spoon.
- Regularly dispose of medicines that have expired or are no longer needed.
- Store medicines and household products up, away and out of sight, preferably locked.
- Never take someone else’s medicine, including giving children medicine made for adults.
- Use child-resistant containers whenever possible but remember nothing is childproof.
- Reseal and lock up harmful items after each use.
- Have working carbon monoxide detectors in your home.

If you think someone came in contact with something dangerous, contact the New Jersey Poison Control Center immediately for medical treatment advice and guidance. Anyone may call 24/7 for medical help - children, teens and adults.

Poison control centers are a medical resource for the public and healthcare providers. Get help 24/7: Call the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222 or [start an online chat](#). If someone isn’t breathing, is having difficulty waking up or having a seizure, call 911.

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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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