

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

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### **America's Poison Centers Warns Public About the Dangers of Pink Cocaine**

Pink cocaine – an illicitly manufactured mixture of drugs dyed pink with food coloring also known as 2C, tusi or tucibi – emerged as a popular party drug in Europe and Latin America and is gaining popularity in the United States.

Since January 2024, America's Poison Centers National Poison Data System® has documented 18 pink cocaine exposures reported by U.S. Poison Centers in four states. Nearly all patients (83%) received medical treatment. Seven were hospitalized, three with life-threatening symptoms. Additionally, one unconfirmed death has been reported associated with pink cocaine use.

"Pink cocaine is dangerous because you never know what's actually in it," said Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](http://NJPoisonCenter.org) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](http://RutgersNewJerseyMedicalSchool.org).

"Pink cocaine is a drug often associated with the nightlife and club scene," said Calello, adding the powdered substance, which rarely contains just cocaine, typically is a mixture of several substances such as ketamine, methamphetamine, ecstasy (or molly), fentanyl and xylazine, a veterinary tranquilizer. "Since the contents and strength of the ingredients can significantly vary from batch to batch, a person cannot know how their body will react to each dose of the drug. Pink cocaine has a significant potential for dangerous drug interactions. Effects may include cardiac arrhythmias, seizures, cardiac arrests and other life-threatening consequences."

### **What's in Pink Cocaine?**

Despite its name, pink cocaine usually contains little or no cocaine. Initial versions contained the synthetic stimulants 2C or 2-CB. More recently, pink cocaine refers to an evolving mixture of stimulants, hallucinogens, opioids and other psychoactive substances. Pink cocaine, usually in powder or pill form, typically is swallowed or inhaled. It isn't usually injected.

Testing of pink cocaine powders in the U.S. reveals most contained:

- Ketamine and ketamine precursors (dissociative anesthetic)
- MDMA, also known as ecstasy (stimulant and hallucinogen)
- Caffeine (stimulant)

Other tested batches of pink cocaine contain stimulants such as methamphetamine and cocaine, strong hallucinogens such as MDA (Sally) and DMT, the anesthetic lidocaine and opioids including oxycodone and tramadol. Additionally, some mixtures may contain fentanyl.

### **What Are the Symptoms of Pink Cocaine Overdose?**

Because the combination of drugs in each batch may not be known, symptoms may include:

- Vomiting
- Loss of consciousness
- Severe agitation
- Paranoia
- Hallucinations

Additionally, known symptoms of stimulant overdose may occur, including:

- Hyperthermia (elevated body temperature)
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Seizures
- Dysrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms)

Poison centers offer the following precautions to protect against poisoning:

- Don't use pink cocaine alone or in combination with other substances or drugs.
- Call 911 immediately if someone isn't responsive, not breathing or is seizing.
- While waiting for first responders, start CPR.
- If available, naloxone (Narcan) may be administered if the person is unresponsive or not breathing.
- Call Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222 to reach your local poison center if you suspect someone has taken pink cocaine.

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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

#### **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).

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