

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

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### **Dangerously High Temperatures in New Jersey**

Feeling Sick – Get Medical Help Fast

New Jersey is experiencing a wave of dangerously hot and humid temperatures. Although most residents go about their daily routines regardless of the unbearable temperatures, extreme summer heat can cause dangerous health effects. When body temperatures rise to dangerous levels, the brain and body overheat, resulting in an increased risk for health-related illnesses, stroke, or death.

Everyone is at risk for heat-related illnesses, including heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat rash, and sun poisoning (which occurs with severe sunburn). However, health effects may be more severe in certain groups including children, older adults, people with chronic illnesses, and people with disabilities. Athletes, low-income families, outdoor workers, or anyone spending long periods of time outdoors are also at high risk and should be aware of the symptoms.

"Sadly, heat-related deaths and illnesses happen every year," says Diane Calello, MD, Executive and Medical Director of the New Jersey Poison Control Center at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. "Hyperthermia (heat stroke) not only occurs when temperatures reach dangerous levels, but also from the use of certain therapeutic medicines, recreational drugs, and illegal substances. These can prevent the body from cooling down through sweating and lead to serious complications including drug-induced fever, dehydration, and death."

Common medications like antidepressants, antihistamines, diuretics, antipsychotics, and stimulants for ADHD can cause heat-related complications. It's important to know if the medicine or drug you are taking increases your sensitivity to heat. Contact the NJ Poison Control Center for more information: 1-800-222-1222.

Symptoms of heat illness include stomach/muscle cramps, nausea, vomiting, headache, dizziness, weakness, heavy or no sweating, confusion, unusual behavior, irritability, delusions, hallucinations, seizures, and coma. Heat stroke is a medical emergency. Act fast.

#### **Prevention Tips:**

- Stay Hydrated: Drink water throughout the day; avoid sugary and alcoholic drinks.
- Stay Cool: Avoid the sun in peak hours and seek air-conditioned areas.
- Dress Light: Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing.
- Use Sunscreen: Apply often; sunburn increases dehydration risk.
- Protect Pets: Don't leave them outside or in cars; provide water and shade.
- Never Leave People or Pets in Cars: Temperatures rise to deadly levels quickly.

If someone is not breathing, difficult to wake, or having a seizure, call 9-1-1.  
For all other heat-related concerns, call the NJ Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 or chat online at [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org).

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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

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

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