

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

## HEALTH ADVISORY

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### Study Shows How U.S. Poison Centers Save the Nation Billions Each Year

*New Jersey Poison Control Center at Rutgers highlights local impact and encourages community to utilize free, life-saving services*

U.S. Poison Centers save \$3.1 billion every year in medical costs and lost productivity, according to a new independent study released by America's Poison Centers. Conducted by the nonprofit research organization [RAND](#), the report confirms that Poison Centers provide substantial economic and societal benefits for communities throughout the nation. The [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#), part of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and officially known as the New Jersey Poison Information and Education (NJPIES), responds to more than 54,000 cases annually and provides critical services to prevent poisonings and 24/7 expert support to families and individuals in the community.

The RAND study, [Poison Prevention, Treatment, and Detection as Public Health Investments](#), found that for every dollar invested in poison center services, communities receive \$16.77 in benefits. These cost-saving benefits reflect reduced emergency department use, shortened hospital stays, decreased mortality risk, enhanced public health surveillance and improved patient outcome.

However, even as utilization of poison center services continues to increase, overall funding for Poison Centers has decreased by 8% from 2011 to 2024 in real dollars, alongside a reduction in subsidized support. Amid rising health care costs, these budget cuts pose an increasing threat to the ability of Poison Centers to provide life-saving services and 24/7 coverage.

The report found that Poison Centers and their national infrastructure have significantly modernized over the past decade, expanding beyond conventional telephone calls to offer text and live chat services that better meet the changing needs of the public and the health care system.

"Behind these findings are real people we've helped – from small scares to serious emergencies," said Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the New Jersey Poison Control Center. "Each call reflects our essential role in protecting residents and guiding them through evidence-based care."

“Poison Centers serve as a trusted source of fast, expert medical guidance for everyone — adults, children and medical professionals,” Calello continued. “Callers could be a worried father whose toddler ingested cannabis edibles, an adult who believes they took too much acetaminophen for flu-like symptoms, a teacher who is concerned about a student who ate a berry from a park tree or a triage nurse who is unsure if a young child who swallowed a magnet needs emergency care.”

The demand for poison center expertise continues to increase. In 2025, the New Jersey Poison Control Center responded to 54,442 cases for medical assistance, up from 51,456 cases in 2024 — reflecting the rise in public health needs and the rising number of families, caregivers and residents who rely on the free, confidential services provided by the poison control center.

“Every day, lives are protected because expert help is only a call away,” Calello said. “For New Jerseyans, our poison control center is more than a hotline — it’s a lifeline. Our toxicology specialists prevent unnecessary ER visits, reduce health care costs and provide lifesaving guidance around the clock. Our impact is felt in every community, ensuring timely, expert care that keeps people safe and supports the broader health care system. We remain committed to ensuring every person in New Jersey can access expert medical help, anytime, anywhere.”

For more than 40 years, the New Jersey Poison Control Center has served as the state’s primary safeguard against injury and death from poisoning, providing free, confidential medical consultation 24/7 through its hotline, text and live chat services.

Each year, the center’s specially trained physicians, nurses and pharmacists assist in the management of exposure cases and information requests, addressing critical issues such as opioid misuse (including fentanyl), heroin addiction, edible marijuana exposures in children, adolescent and teen suicide attempts as well as other complex toxicology emergencies affecting residents of all ages.

Beyond its core function of providing medical guidance to health care professionals and the public, the New Jersey Poison Control Center supports statewide disaster preparedness and response, medication and household safety education, overdose prevention efforts, and real-time surveillance of emerging hazards. It also operates several specialized hotlines for the New Jersey Department of Health, including those for COVID-19, mpox, HIV/AIDS, and sexually transmitted infections and after-hours communicable disease reporting.

For fast, free, confidential help for a potential poisoning or question, contact the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222, visit [PoisonHelp.org](https://PoisonHelp.org) or reach your local poison center at [NJPoisonCenter.org](https://NJPoisonCenter.org).

**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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