



RUTGERS HEALTH
New Jersey Medical School

New Jersey Poison Control Center
Rutgers Health
140 Bergen Street, Suite G1600
Newark, NJ 07103

NJPoisonCenter.org
p: 973-972-9280
Emergencies: 1-800-222-1222

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

HEALTH ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

March 16, 2026

Prevent Tomorrow's Emergencies Today: New Jersey Poison Control Center Urges You to Prevent the Preventable

National Poison Prevention Week highlights simple everyday actions that can reduce injuries

Most poison emergencies begin with an ordinary moment – a distracted minute, an unlocked cabinet or a dangerous product left within a child's reach.

And yet, many emergencies that happen at home are entirely preventable.

With National Poison Prevention Week, which runs from March 15 to March 21, the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) joins a nationwide effort encouraging individuals and families to take simple steps today that can prevent tomorrow's emergencies. With U.S. Poison Centers responding to more than 2 million cases each year – about one case every 15 seconds – the message is clear: knowing the risks and acting early can resolve everyday mishaps safely, stop minor concerns from becoming emergencies and, when it matters most, save lives.

Common Products, Unexpected Dangers

"Poisonings don't wait – they can happen in seconds, in the places we feel safest," said Bruce Ruck, managing director of the New Jersey Poison Control Center at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](#).

From medications and cleaning products to cannabis edibles, vape liquids and carbon monoxide sources, many poisoning risks hide in plain sight. Exposures often happen when routines change or when products are left accessible.

"The good news is that poison exposures are not inevitable," Ruck said. "They are preventable. Small actions taken today can prevent tomorrow's emergencies."

National data shows that most poison exposures happening at home – about 9 out of 10 – can be safely managed right where they occur. When people call the Poison Help line, they receive fast,

accurate medical guidance that helps them handle the situation without leaving home. This quick expert support improves outcomes and often prevents unnecessary emergency department visits.

A recent independent analysis by RAND, "[Poison Prevention, Treatment, and Detection as Public Health Investments](#)," underscores the essential value poison centers provide:

- U.S. Poison Centers generate about \$3.1 billion in annual healthcare-related benefits, largely through avoided emergency department care, shorter hospital stays, and improved patient outcomes.
- For every \$1 spent, communities receive an estimated \$16.77 in additional benefits, including decreased risk of death, enhanced public health services, cost savings and improved peace of mind.

These findings demonstrate not only the lifesaving impact of poison centers but also their vital role in reducing strain on the healthcare system and supporting families when every second counts.

To prevent poison exposures, the New Jersey Poison Control Center urges everyone to take simple, practical steps to protect themselves and those around them:

- Store medicines, vitamins, cannabis edibles, nicotine and vaping products, laundry packets and household cleaners and chemicals in a secure place, out of sight and reach of children and pets.
- Never mix household cleaners as mixing them can create dangerous gases.
- Follow the directions on the medicine label carefully and double-check the dose.
- Keep products in their original containers with labels on.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home, including near sleeping areas and in the basement, and test them regularly.
- Never use a gas generator inside your home, basement, garage or near doors and windows.
- Never run a car inside an attached garage, even if the garage door is open.
- Save the Poison Help line in your phone: 1-800-222-1222.

"Whether it's locking up medications, reading labels, storing products safely, or recognizing hidden hazards, every action counts in preventing harm," said Ruck. "When families understand the risks in their homes, they're empowered to protect the people they love."

"And if you're ever unsure, the New Jersey Poison Control Center is your first and fastest source of expert help, any time of day," Ruck said.

Poison center specialists provide free, confidential medical advice around the clock – including nights, weekends, and holidays – for medicine errors, chemical concerns, household product exposures, plant

or mushroom ingestions, bites and stings and much more. Anyone can call for help at any time, whether it's a child, teen, or adult.

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.

Stay Connected : [FB](#) | [X](#) | [Instagram](#) | [TikTok](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Website](#)

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.

###