

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

HEALTH ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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A Back-to-Campus Warning: Energy Drinks Can Hide the Dangerous Effects of Alcohol

Mixing the caffeinated, sugary beverages with alcohol can increase the risk of alcohol poisoning, injuries and impaired judgment

As students prepare for the start of the fall semester, experts with the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](https://www.njpoisoncenter.org) are warning about the dangers of mixing energy drinks with alcohol.

Common at parties, tailgates and other social gatherings, this combination can increase the risk of alcohol poisoning, injury and impaired judgment.

Caffeine in energy drinks acts as a stimulant, while alcohol is a depressant. Together, they can affect how people perceive the effects of alcohol. Students may feel “less drunk” than they actually are, leading them to drink more alcohol than they otherwise would. As a result, alcohol-related harms become more likely.

“As students prepare for a new school year, it's important to understand that energy drinks don't make alcohol safer,” said Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the New Jersey Poison Control Center at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](https://www.rutgers.edu). “While caffeine may make someone feel more awake, it can hide the warning signs of intoxication and create a false sense of sobriety. Students may think they're less impaired than they really are.”

Calello added that a false sense of confidence “can lead people to drink more alcohol or underestimate their level of impairment. The result can be alcohol poisoning, injuries, and other serious alcohol-related harms.”

Risks of mixing alcohol and energy drinks include:

- Greater risk of alcohol poisoning and overdose.
- Increased likelihood of accidents, impaired driving and other alcohol-related harms.
- Dangerous heart effects, including irregular heartbeat and high blood pressure.
- Sleep disruption and severe dehydration.

Advice for students:

- Never mix alcohol with energy drinks.
- Keep an eye out for friends who may be over-intoxicated and call for help immediately.

- If you have questions or concerns about alcohol, energy products, or another potential exposure, New Jersey Poison Control experts are available 24/7 for free, confidential medical advice.

If someone becomes sick or develops unexpected symptoms after drinking alcohol, mixing substances or using energy products, don't wait. Call the New Jersey Poison Control Center, where specially trained medical professionals are available 24/7 for medication errors, accidental ingestions, food poisoning, chemical exposures, carbon monoxide concerns and other poison-related questions and emergencies.

Children, teenagers and adults can get help by calling the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222 or [chatting online](#).

For life-threatening emergencies – such as trouble breathing, difficulty waking or seizures – 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

Established in 1954, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School (NJMS), part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, annually graduates around 170 skilled physicians and offers MD/PhD, MD/MPH, and MD/MBA programs. Committed to excellence in education, research, clinical care, and community engagement, NJMS comprises 20 dynamic academic departments and collaborates with healthcare partners, including University Hospital. With renowned faculty, a student-run clinic, and many cutting-edge centers and institutes, NJMS invites you to explore its rich history and academic programs at <https://njms.rutgers.edu/>.

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