

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

HEALTH ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
October 6, 2026

How a Viral Trend Sent a New Jersey Teenager to the Hospital

Teens call it "Benny tripping," but Poison Control experts call it a medical emergency

The New Jersey Poison Control Center experts are warning parents, caregivers, educators and teens about the dangers of a social media trend known as "Benny tripping" after poison specialists were involved in the medical management of a New Jersey teenager who was hospitalized following the intentional misuse of Benadryl®.

The teenager intentionally took a large dose of Benadryl in an attempt to experience hallucinations, a practice promoted online as "Benny tripping" or the "Benadryl challenge." The teen was described as "not acting like themselves" before symptoms progressed to confusion, disorientation and slurred speech, requiring hospitalization.

"Many families have Benadryl and other over-the-counter medicines at home and would never expect it to send a child to the hospital," said Diane Calello, executive and medical director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](http://NJPoisonCenter.org) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](http://RutgersNJMS.edu). "What may look harmless on a screen can become a medical emergency in real life."

Diphenhydramine, the active ingredient in Benadryl, is a commonly used over-the-counter (OTC) antihistamine. When taken in excessive amounts, it can cause hallucinations, severe confusion, seizures, dangerous heart rhythm disturbances, loss of consciousness and even death.

How parents can help prevent medicine misuse:

- Talk with teens about the dangers of social media challenges and medicine misuse.
- Keep medicines, including over-the-counter medicines such as Benadryl, locked up and out of sight and monitor quantities when possible.
- Children and teens shouldn't have unsupervised access to medicines. Parents and caregivers should maintain oversight and administer medicines whenever appropriate.
- Help children and teens understand that over-the-counter medicines can be just as dangerous as prescription medicines when misused.

If someone has taken too much Benadryl or any medicine, don't wait for symptoms to worsen. Contact the New Jersey Poison Control Center immediately. Free, confidential expert medical guidance is available 24/7 by calling the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222 or [chatting online](#).

For life-threatening emergencies, such as difficulty breathing, difficulty waking or seizures, call 911 immediately.

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 New Jersey Medical School

Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Managing Director, New Jersey Poison Control Center, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School

About New Jersey Poison Control Center/NJPIES

The New Jersey Poison Control Center, officially known as the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System (NJPIES), is the state's poison control center and is part of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School's Department of Emergency Medicine.

Poison specialists are doctors, nurses, and pharmacists who provide free, expert medical guidance for poisonings, medication errors, overdoses, drug interactions, carbon monoxide incidents, environmental hazards, household chemicals, bites and stings, plant-related concerns, and other poisoning emergencies. Services are free, confidential, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and accessible in any language.

Need Poison Control? Call the Poison Help line at 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/>.

###