



## The New Jersey Poison Information & Education System

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Designated regional poison center  
for New Jersey by New Jersey  
Department of Health and Senior  
Services and the American  
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Centers

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# Adolescents and Medicine Abuse

## NATIONAL MEDICINE ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH – AUGUST 2008

(Newark, NJ) – The New Jersey Poison Control Center (NJPIES) recognizes August as National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month. In response to a nationwide problem, Senators Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-Del.) and Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa) sponsored resolution S.Res. 614; encouraging parental and community awareness of *the intentional abuse of prescription and over-the-counter medicines*. The measure calls for active community involvement to educate parents about the dangers of prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicine abuse among teens.

“The use of OTC cough and cold preparations by adolescents in search of a “cheap and legal high” has reached near epidemic proportions,” states Steven M. Marcus, MD, Pediatrician, Medical Toxicologist and Medical Director of NJPIES. “Almost daily, the center is consulted on such cases. Over the past 8 years, New Jersey has experienced a steady increase in unintentional poisoning deaths. Currently, the number of deaths related to unintentional poisonings exceeds those of homicides and are quickly approaching the death rates associated with motor vehicle accidents in the state” said Dr. Marcus.

The poison center has launched a study group charged with addressing the issues of unintentional deaths related to poisonings. By calling attention to this national problem, NJPIES hopes to encourage health professionals to educate their communities about the serious and life-threatening consequences of abusing prescription and over-the-counter medicines.

Prescription drug abuse is increasing among all ages from children through adult. For more information regarding drugs of abuse, call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. Services are free and confidential. The hotline is accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. Hearing impaired may call 973-926-8008.

**Remember, Help Is Just a Phone Call Away!**

located at University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey

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