

NEWS RELEASE

The New Jersey Poison Information & Education System
Serving New Jersey Since 1983

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Holiday Safety Tips for Parents, Partygoers and Pets

New Jersey Poison Control Offers Round-the-Clock
Prevention and Emergency Counsel, Even on Christmas!

Newark, N.J., December 9, 2009— From keeping your pets away from the plants to ensuring that teens are not “pharming” for holiday highs, or the tots are playing with toxic-free toys, there are plenty of challenges during the holiday season. The New Jersey Poison & Education System offers these safety tips geared toward this festive time of year.

Toy Safety

- If in doubt about a toy, call NJPIES for info on which toys may be on the recall list.
- Avoid toys with small magnets for children under age 6 and make sure that small batteries in battery-operated toys are secured.
- If you have a question about a toy, save the toy box or wrapper as reference when calling NJPIES at 1-800-222-1222. The information can help the professional on call determine possible safety or toxicity issues.

Partygoer Safety

- If you’re giving a party, remove all prescription and over-the-counter drugs from accessible medicine cabinets and other storage areas (bedside stands, kitchen cabinets, etc.).
- The prescription medicine or over-the-counter medicine a partygoer is taking may not mix well with party food and beverages being served. Call NJPIES for advice.
- Check the latest holiday food safety media alerts posted on www.NJPIES.org and call the hotline at 1-800-222-1222 if you suspect food poisoning of any sort. The center tracks calls to determine if an incident is isolated, or part of a larger area-wide trend.
- If you choose to drink alcohol in mixed drinks, select fruit juices over carbonated mixers. Carbonation speeds the absorption of alcohol.

Pet Safety

- Keep holly, mistletoe and lilies out of reach of pets. Pets don’t understand that indoor greenery isn’t edible. Call NJPIES if your pet has ingested any of these plants or another potentially harmful substance.

- Do not put aspirin in the water to help keep your Christmas tree “fresh.” It can be harmful to your pet if ingested.
- Keep snow globes out of reach of both pets and small children because they may contain antifreeze, which can be poisonous if ingested.
- Many enjoyable holiday foods for humans can cause discomfort or illness in your pet. The best defense is not to feed your pet any human food. Be especially careful to keep your pet away from chocolate and alcohol.

24/7 Bilingual Assistance

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies, or other holiday-related and toxic chemical interaction and safety matters, can call the toll-free NJPIES hotline at **1-800-222-1222**. The hearing impaired can call **973-926-8008**. For more information, visit www.njpies.org or call **(973) 972-9280**.

NJPIES staffs phone lines with certified medical professionals, including medical doctors, registered nurses and pharmacists. These professionals are available 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, including on Christmas Day.

About NJPIES

As New Jersey’s official Poison Control Center, The New Jersey Poison Information & Education System (NJPIES) provides information on poison prevention and treatments. Chartered in 1983, NJPIES provides free, confidential consultation through telephone hotline services and the web. Medical professionals including physicians, registered nurses and pharmacists offer confidential advice regarding poison emergencies, poison prevention information, drug information, food poisoning, animal bites, and more. These specialists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

NJPIES coordinates state poison education and research, and is the designated regional poison center by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and the American Association of Poison Control Centers. It tracks incidences of adverse reactions to food, drugs and vaccines to monitor potential public health issues and provide data to the FDA and CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A division of the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health of UMDNJ, its state-of-the-art center is located on the Newark campus.

About UMDNJ

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) is the nation's largest free-standing public health sciences university with more than 5,500 students attending the state's three medical schools, its only dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health related professions, a school of nursing and its only school of public health, on five campuses. Annually, there are more than two million patient visits at UMDNJ facilities and faculty practices at campuses in Newark, New Brunswick/Piscataway, Scotch Plains, Camden and Stratford. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a Level I Trauma Center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, a mental health and addiction services network.

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