



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



NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Brian Hyland, SGW, 973-263-5194, bhyland@sgw.com

Nancy Sergeant, SGW, 973-263-5471, nsergeant@sgw.com

Mary Appelmann, SGW, 973-263-5182, mappelmann@sgw.com

Alicia Gambino, MA, CHES, NJPIES Director of Public Education, 973-972-9280, agambino@njpies.org

NJ Poison Control Unveils Interactive Website with Live Chat and Texting Capabilities

Designed to improve online access to reliable professional advice and information

Website (www.NJPIES.org) and hot line (800-222-1222) staffed by trained medical professionals

NEWARK, N.J. — October 25, 2010 — The New Jersey Poison Control Center today announces the relaunch of its website, www.njpies.org, designed with new features that address the increasing interactive demands of today's Internet-savvy residents, including live chat service and real-time texting capabilities.

According to a [study](#) published last year by the Pew Research Center, 61 percent of adults look online for health information and 60 percent of them say what they found online affected a decision about how to treat an illness or condition.¹

"With more and more people using the Internet to find health information, it is imperative that we offer a reliable and user-friendly online resource for accurate medical advice and information," said Steven Marcus, M.D., executive and medical director of the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES). "Our site is unique because people can interact directly with trained medical professionals, rather than passively read an article that might be inaccurate or outdated."

Visitors who use the online chat or texting services are connected to the same local doctors, nurses and pharmacists who answer calls at the poison control hot line. Spanish-speaking assistance is available.

Dr. Marcus added that NJPIES' online chat and texting capabilities put the poison center on the cutting edge by providing unprecedented access for people with disabilities.

“Many people with hearing impairments are using the Internet and texting rather than using the antiquated TTY systems,²” he said.

Besides new interactive features, the renovated site includes intuitive subject tabs and a more visible search bar that can help visitors find topics quickly and efficiently. The home page also has up-to-date links to poison-related news alerts and product recalls.

“Every portion of our site has been updated and upgraded to offer visitors a highly professional, world-class online experience with content that is relevant, timely and easy to navigate,” said Alicia Gambino, Director of Education for NJPIES. “Our goal is to be a primary source of poison safety information for parents, caregivers, teachers and medical professionals.”

The site’s home page features six main tabs that provide quick, easy access to information on the following subjects:

- **Public Education** – National and statewide poison-related facts, instructional materials, interactive learning tools and an online form to submit requests for free onsite programs and workshops.
- **Medication** – Instructions on safe use of prescription and over-the-counter medicines, supplements and vitamins, and details about common side effects.
- **Household** – Information about proper storage of familiar household products and risks of swallowing or inhaling materials in cleaning supplies, pesticides and cosmetics, etc.
- **Food** – Instructions on proper handling and storage of groceries to prevent cross-contamination or spoilage that can lead to food poisoning.
- **Animals** – Tips for keeping pets safe and healthy in and around the home.
- **Other** – Messages relating to specific seasons, as well as risks of overuse or misuse of alcohol and tobacco products.

The site also includes a dedicated home page for healthcare professionals, which offers professional education resources, lectures, case studies and more.

Call to action

NJPIES urges medical professionals, parents, educators, caregivers and the general public to visit www.njpies.org or call the toll-free poison center hot line, **800-222-1222**, to learn more about poison awareness and safety or during a poison emergency.

About NJPIES

As New Jersey’s only poison control center, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System provides information on poison prevention and treatments. Chartered in 1983, NJPIES provides free consultation through telephone hot line services and the Web. Medical professionals such as physicians, registered nurses and pharmacists offer confidential advice regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention, drugs, food poisoning, animal bites and more. These specialists are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

NJPIES coordinates state poison education and research and is designated as the 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 in order to monitor potential public health issues and provide data to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A division of the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community

Health of the New Jersey Medical School of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, it has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies, and those with any drug information questions, should call the toll-free hot line, **800-222-1222**, any time. The hearing impaired may call **973-926-8008**. For more information, visit www.njpies.org or call **973-972-9280**.

About UMDNJ

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey is the nation's largest freestanding public health sciences university, with more than 5,500 students attending. The state's three medical schools, a dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health-related professions, a school of nursing and a school of public health are housed on five campuses — Newark, New Brunswick/Piscataway, Scotch Plains, Camden and Stratford. Annually, there are more than 2 million patient visits at UMDNJ facilities and faculty practices at the campuses. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a level I trauma center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, a mental health and addiction services network.

###

Cited Sources:

¹ Pew Internet & American Life Project, "The Social Life of Health Information," June 12, 2009, http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2009/PIP_Health_2009.pdf

² The U.S. Department of Justice, "Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in State and Local Government Services; Accessibility of Next Generation 9-1-1," http://www.ada.gov/anprm2010/nextgen_9-1-1%20anprm_2010.htm