



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



Media Contacts:

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

Bruce Ruck, PharmD., NJPIES Director of Drug Information and Professional Education, 973-972-9280, bruck@njpies.org

NEWS RELEASE

Safety Should Never Take a Holiday Break Poison Center Experts Recommend Tips to Avoid Injury

24/7 Multilingual Hotline: 1-800-222-1222

Text 800-222-1222@njpies.org

Real People. Real Answers.

Dr. Steven Marcus, Executive and Medical Director
Dr. Bruce Ruck, Director, Drug Information and Professional Education
New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

Available for Interviews

Newark, N.J. – June 20, 2011 - Family gatherings are a great way to spend summer's biggest holiday weekend. With all the excitement and fun, it is possible to overlook potential hazards that may cause injury during this year's 4th of July celebrations. Poison center experts receive a spike in calls during summer holiday weekends concerning torch oil ingestion, mosquito spraying, alcohol ingestion, food poisoning, poisonous plants, glow products, firework ingestions, etc. "Mishaps can occur at any time and being prepared and informed in advance is important," says Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., of the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES).

Follow these safety tips to ensure a healthy holiday weekend.

Safety Check

- Store charcoal and lighter fluid containers and jugs containing lamp oil in locked cabinets away from food and drinks. Lamp oil refill bottles closely resemble juice containers. It is difficult to pour the liquid directly from the bottle into the torch and frequently the user pours the liquid into a plastic or paper cup in order to then transfer it into the torch. This leaves a cup with what appears to be lemonade or apple juice sitting in it, a dangerous invitation to disaster! When accidentally taken by mouth, such lamp oils can enter the lungs causing pneumonia and death.
- Do not let meats and salads made with mayonnaise or egg sit out for more than 2 hours. Remember, cold foods should be kept cold and hot foods should be kept hot. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers promptly.
- Do Not Cross-Contaminate! Cooked foods should not be placed on any unwashed plates/containers that previously held raw meat, poultry, fish, or seafood.
- Remove all prescription and over-the-counter medicines from accessible medicine cabinets and other storage areas (bedside stands, kitchen cabinets, etc.). When friends and family visit, make sure all of their medications (prescription, non-prescription, herbal, vitamins and dietary supplements) are LOCKED UP and kept out of reach of children and pets.
- Use caution in the sun because some medications can greatly increase the chance for severe sunburn even when using sunscreen.

- Avoid sunburn by limiting time spent in the sun especially when the sun is the strongest (from 10 am to 2 pm). Wear clothing to cover exposed skin (long-sleeve shirts, pants, hats, and sunglasses) and regularly apply sunscreen with a broad spectrum SPF of 15 or higher.
- Avoid areas where poison ivy, poison sumac, and poison oak may grow.
- Limit outdoor activities at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active. Apply 10% to 35% DEET containing insect repellent to clothes and exposed skin when taking part in outdoor activities.
- Alcohol poisoning should always be a concern especially around the holidays when curious children and pets have greater access to cocktails. Empty all glasses and/or cans that contain alcohol as promptly as possible.
- Avoid drinking alcohol when taking prescription or over-the-counter medicines. Check with your pharmacist or the Poison Control Center to find out if an interaction may occur.
- Check with guests when planning your holiday menu to see if anyone has food allergies. Increasing numbers of adults and children are developing allergies to foods. Making sure to avoid problematic foods can prevent an unnecessary trip to the emergency room.
- Use caution when opening pool chemical containers, such as chlorine.
- Be sure to drink plenty of water and wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting, open-woven clothes during a heat wave.
- Although the chemicals used in glow products are considered non-toxic, be mindful that if exposed, irritation to skin, eye and stomach can occur.

If you suspect a poisoning, **CALL THE POISON CONTROL CENTER'S HOTLINE IMMEDIATELY at 1-800-222-1222**, for treatment advice. The hotline should be called both for emergency poisonings as well as for non-emergency questions regarding medications, household products, plants, environmental contaminants, or other poisons. The hotline is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! Real People. Real Answers.

Remember, Help Is Just a Phone Call Away!

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, its state-of-the-art center is located on the school's Newark campus.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies should call the bilingual toll-free hot line, 1-800-222-1222, 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 two 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.

###