



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

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:

800-222-1222 (800-962-1253 outside NJ)

Call the NJ Poison Center – Don't Waste Time Searching the Internet

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

Available for Interviews

(Newark, NJ) – December 5, 2012 — Now that most of us have the Internet literally at our fingertips, the urge to search any question that pops up is strong. However, there are situations where the more old-fashioned approach is better. When you suspect your child or other family member has swallowed or inhaled something they shouldn't, your first step should be to call the poison center hotline—no head for the computer.

The experts at the NJ Poison Center are increasingly hearing from callers that they ran an Internet search before calling. Research and being an informed patient is important but when every minute counts, calling the experts before consulting a search engine is crucial.

"Many of the calls we get are genuine emergencies," said Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Director of Drug Information and Professional Education at the NJ Poison Center. "Poisons and medicines may act very quickly. Having a trained poison specialist give you exact instructions for your specific situation can help significantly during those critical first few minutes."

The internet is filled with more information than we could possibly absorb in a lifetime. There are some reputable health care sites with valuable information, but general health information doesn't take into account important factors that are considered during an emergency.

Sometimes the danger of ingesting a substance isn't in the substance itself but in potential interactions with other medications or medical conditions. A medication that would be harmless for one person could have dangerous complications for another.

"Some prescription medications can cause dangerous drug interactions with over-the-counter cough or allergy medicines, for instance," Ruck said. "Poison center experts are health care professionals specially trained on exactly what questions to ask and what to look for to determine the best course of treatment."

NJ Poison Experts can quickly determine potential complications and the best way to approach the situation. Sometimes, at-home treatment or just observing for symptoms can be sufficient. When medical attention is needed, the poison center specialist can make arrangements at an emergency department to ensure they have the treatment needed ready.

If you believe your child or anyone else has ingested something that could be harmful, call 800-222-1222. If someone is unconscious, not breathing, seizing/convulsing, bleeding profusely, difficult to arouse/wake up, etc. call 911 immediately, otherwise call the NJ Poison Experts at (1-800-222-1222). They are always here to help with accidents or questions involving medicines, chemicals or household products, etc. Help is available in over 150 languages; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Program the Poison Help line (800-222-1222) into your cell phone and post it near your home and office phones too. There are no silly questions and our trained medical staff are always available to answer a question, quell a fear, provide advice, or intervene to get emergency services on site and prepped to provide the needed protocol in the fastest response time. When in doubt, check it out - Prevention is truly the best possible medicine.

Doing online research and learning about medical conditions is a new sign of the times and a must-do for a savvy patient. But savvy patients need to know when it's important to put down the smartphone and dial an emergency number to get help. Remember, Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

Real People. Real Answers.

Call to Action – Help is Just a Phone Call Away

NJPIES leaders urge medical professionals, parents, educators, caregivers and the general public to call the toll-free poison center hot line, 800-222-1222, with any poison related question 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. You may also chat or text in using our website, www.njpies.org. **Real People. Real Answers.**

The NJ poison experts recommend putting the number in all family cell phones as well as programming it as a speed dial number on landlines (home and office). In addition, prominently post the number near all phones in the home and office.

Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc. Be poison smart - share poison prevention tips with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

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. NJPIES 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.

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