



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

NEWS RELEASE

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Possible Outbreak of West Nile Virus -- NJ Poison Experts Advise on Prevention --

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. — August 22, 2012 – Several states across the country are reporting large numbers of West Nile Virus (WNV) cases; the virus is being blamed for illness and deaths. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this is the worst outbreak in many years.

It is not yet known whether New Jersey will be the next state to get hit hard by this outbreak, but we caution the public to be alert and take measures to prevent becoming a victim. Since the WNV is spread from mosquitoes to humans, the NJ Poison Experts suggest the following safety tips.

Safety Tips to Decrease Risk of Contracting West Nile Virus (WNV):

- When the weather permits, wear long-sleeved, loose-fitting shirts and long pants whenever outdoors. Pants should be tucked into socks or boot tops to help keep insects from reaching the skin.
- Limit outdoor activities at dawn, dusk, and the early evenings when mosquitoes are most active. Exposure to mosquitoes can be decreased simply by limiting time spent outdoors.
- Eliminate standing water that collects in birdbaths, flower pots, swimming pool covers, buckets and containers, pet food and water dishes, tires, barrels, unused pools and roof gutters. Standing (stagnant) water can be the perfect breeding grounds for mosquitoes.
- Place mosquito netting over infant carriers when you are outdoors with infants.
- Install or repair window and door screens to prevent mosquitoes from getting indoors.
- Apply 10% to 35% DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) containing insect repellent to clothes and exposed skin when taking part in outdoor activities. DEET is available in many formulations including lotions, solutions, creams, gels, sprays, and towelettes. Insect repellents should NOT be sprayed on the face since they may irritate the eyes and mouth. Instead, spray onto hands and then rub onto the face. Insect repellents are NOT suggested for very young children (< 3 years old) and application to broken skin or wounds should be avoided, but can be applied to clothing. Concentrations above 15% should be applied to clothing rather than skin. Insect repellents must be reapplied, as per the directions, at intervals.

According to Dr. Bruce Ruck, Director of Drug Information at NJPIES, "Application of DEET should be according to the specific directions on the product used. Some products can be applied to the skin, while others are intended for application to clothing, sleeping bags, tents, etc. Spraying DEET on clothes is suggested because mosquitoes may bite through clothing." If you would like further information about West Nile Virus, DEET or DEET containing products, call the NJ Poison Experts at 800-222-1222; they are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year to assist you.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, or have questions about the safety of an item in your home, 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 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.

Real People. Real Answers.

Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) to be poison smart. Be a poison prevention superhero - share poison prevention tips with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

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.

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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