



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

## **NEWS RELEASE**

Media Contacts:

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

### **The Internet Can Literally Make You Sick**

-- In the event of a poison exposure, every second counts --

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

*Available for Interviews*

(Newark, NJ) – May 7, 2013 — The mother of a 3 ½ year old toddler recently called the poison center after her child took one of her husband's pills. She read online about giving Ipecac but was confused about the dose to give. She wanted to know the correct dose of Ipecac to make her child vomit. The experts at the NJ Poison Center immediately stopped her from giving her child ipecac and urged her to never make anyone vomit unless specifically told to do so by the poison control center. Ipecac, once a common treatment for overdoses, is no longer suggested for use. However, on the Internet, numerous sources still suggest its use. The inaccuracy of that information can result in a much more dangerous situation.

While a quick web search may seem like an easy option, it's no substitute for speaking with medical experts. Calls to the Poison Help line at 1-800-222-1222 connect people to doctors, nurses, pharmacists, trained in providing poison information. Poison centers provide free and confidential advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year.

"In the event of a poison exposure, every second counts," said Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., of the NJ Poison Center. "The longer it takes to sift through pages of search results online, the greater the danger of negative health effects. A mistreated exposure can escalate an easy in-home treatment into a trip to the hospital." Because of the unique and complex nature of poisons, it is vital that exposures are handled on a case-by-case basis. Factors like weight, height, medical history, and in some cases even geography can drastically change the outcome of an exposure. Even though the Internet offers a wealth of information, the experts at the NJ Poison Center are the best source for specifically tailored information.

Calling a poison center is the smart thing to do! The experts at the NJ Poison Center keep many New Jerseyans out of the hospital each year with the phone support and advice only a poison expert can provide. In fact, many of the calls to poison centers are from doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals who are seeking specialized treatment advice that only experts at poison centers can answer. If immediate medical attention is needed, the expert on the line will send an ambulance and alert the receiving hospital of the incoming patient's condition and recommend treatment.

Mark Twain once said, "Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint." Over 100 years later, the nation's 57 poison centers are hard at work every day saving Americans from dying from just that...a misprint. Program your cell phone with the Poison Help line and post it near your home phone, 1-800-222-1222. It may save a life someday.

### **Real People. Real Answers.**

#### **Help is Just a Phone Call Away**

If the unthinkable happens, it's good to know help is just a phone call away. If someone is unconscious, not breathing, seizing/convulsing, bleeding profusely, difficult to arouse/wake up, etc. call 911 immediately, otherwise call the poison center at 800-222-1222. 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. The NJ Poison Experts are always here to help with emergencies 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 health professionals 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. Remember, Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

Follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/njpies](http://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 hotline, 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.njpies.org) or call **973-972-9280**.

### **About UMDNJ**

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) is New Jersey's only health sciences university with more than 6,000 students on five campuses attending three medical schools, the State's only dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health related professions, a school of nursing and New Jersey's only school of public health. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a Level I Trauma Center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, which provides a continuum of healthcare services with multiple locations throughout the State.

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