

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

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:
800-222-1222 (800-962-1253 outside NJ)

Add Heating System Safety to Your Fall “To Do” List

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Available for Interviews

(Newark, NJ) – October 10, 2014 — As you complete your fall “to do” list —bag your leaves, bring in your plants, clean your gutters, store outdoor furniture, cover air conditioners, service snow blowers, etc., the NJ Poison Experts strongly urge you to add scheduling a seasonal checkup for your heating systems/fireplaces/furnaces to the list. It is crucial to have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a professional to ensure that all are working and venting properly in order to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is of serious concern to the NJ Poison Experts as we enter into the 2014 heating season. CO poisoning is often referred to as the “Silent Killer” because it is a gas that gives no warning – you can’t see it, smell it or taste it. Exposure to carbon monoxide can produce headaches, sleepiness, fatigue, confusion and irritability at low levels. At higher levels, it can result in nausea, vomiting, irregular heartbeat, impaired vision and coordination, and death. During cold and influenza season carbon monoxide poisoning can easily be confused with those viral illnesses, so prevention of exposure and early detection are important to prevent tragedy.

Many lessons were learned from Hurricane Sandy in regards to carbon monoxide poisonings. For those residents who are still dealing with the aftermath of Sandy and are currently in the process of rebuilding, remember these life saving tips:

1. Only use generators outside, at least 25 feet from your home, doors, or windows to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
2. Never use generators, pressure washers, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside your home, basement, garage, carport, camper, boat cabin, or tent – or even outside near an open window or door.
3. DO NOT heat your home with your stove.
4. Gas appliances must have adequate ventilation so that carbon monoxide will not accumulate.
5. DO NOT cook with charcoal indoors.
6. Furnaces and chimneys should be inspected and cleaned by a trained professional.
7. Open flues when fireplaces are in use.
8. DO NOT idle a car in a closed garage. Once you pull in, immediately turn off the engine.
9. Keep your home well ventilated. If need be, keep a window slightly cracked to allow air flow.

One important way to prevent carbon monoxide **poisoning** is to install fully functioning carbon monoxide detectors. Be sure to change the batteries on the detectors at least twice a year. “This is extremely important as we go into the heating season where carbon monoxide exposures and even poisoning becomes more common,” said Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the NJ Poison Center. The experts highly recommend that everyone install battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors on every level of the home and near every sleeping area.

Detectors should be replaced every 7 years, so be sure to check the manufacture date on the detectors in your home NOW.

If you suspect Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, Take Immediate Action:

1. If you suspect Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, Take Immediate Action. If a loved one is unconscious or unresponsive, get them out of the house and call 911 immediately.
2. Exit the house/building immediately. Do not waste time opening windows to "air" it out; this will delay your escape and cause you to breathe in more dangerous fumes.
3. Contact your local fire department/energy provider.
4. Call the NJ Poison Experts, 800-222-1222, for immediate treatment advice.
5. Do not waste time looking for information on the internet about carbon monoxide poisoning. Call us for fast, free and accurate information.

Do not take chances by waiting until symptoms. If an exposure occurs, 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 **NJ Poison Experts at (1-800-222-1222)**. "Don't waste valuable time looking up information on the Internet when every minute counts. Many of the calls we get are genuine emergencies," said Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the NJ Poison Center. "Having a poison expert give you exact instructions for your specific situation can help significantly during those critical first few minutes."

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

Remember, calls are free and confidential and help is always available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year, even during bouts of Mother Nature like Hurricane Sandy. Call 800-222-1222, chat via www.njpies.org, or text in at 8002221222@njpies.org to contact a NJ Poison Expert. Help is available in more than 150 languages.

We are social. Join us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc. Share what you learn with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

Real People. Real Answers.

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 Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus. NJPIES is funded, in part, by the NJ Department of Health and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

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 Rutgers

Established in 1766, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is America's eighth oldest institution of higher learning and one of the nation's premier public research universities. Serving more than 65,000 students on campuses, centers, institutes and other locations throughout the state, Rutgers is the only public university in New Jersey that is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities.

Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences (RBHS) is the health care education, research, and clinical division of Rutgers University, comprising nine schools and their attendant faculty practices, centers, institutes and clinics; New Jersey's leading comprehensive cancer care center; and New Jersey's largest behavioral health care network.

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