

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

NEWS RELEASE

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

Be Disaster Aware, Take Action to Prepare - National Preparedness Month -

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Available for Interviews

(Newark, NJ) – September 24, 2014 — If an emergency occurred tomorrow, would you be ready? This is an important question to ask our families, friends, and colleagues. When and where emergencies and disasters occur are beyond our control -- but how we prepare and respond are in our control.

Disasters affect thousands of people every year, even in New Jersey. It's important to prepare yourself and your family to deal with any emergency or disaster situations from superstorms to terrorism. Knowing what the risks are and having a plan in place beforehand is a critical part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count. There are simple but important steps we can all take to ensure we know what to do and have what we need in the event of a crisis. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Ready Campaign asks individuals to do three key things:

- make/buy an emergency supply kit
- create a family emergency plan
- be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and their appropriate responses

Since September is designated as National Preparedness Month by FEMA, the NJ Poison Experts want to share lessons learned during our experience with Superstorm Sandy in 2012. Sandy serves as a powerful reminder that storms can produce a great deal of destruction to property and result in serious public health effects. The NJ Poison Center received a surge of calls related to Sandy during and long after the disaster event. Many of these effects were the result of activities which may have been preventable if there had been proper education prior to the event and subsequent.

- Handwashing is an easy, effective way to prevent the spread of germs. Soap and clean water is all you need to reduce the number of germs on hands.
- Only use generators outside, at least 25 feet from your home, doors, or windows to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. 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.
- Check detectors (fire and carbon monoxide) regularly to be sure they are working. Change batteries twice a year. If you don't have these, install them immediately.
 - If your CO detector sounds, leave immediately and call the fire department and/or utility company.
 - For advice or questions, call the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222. Do not waste time looking up information on the Internet.

- Be sure to have an extra supply of prescription medications (at least a 7 day supply) and medical supplies for everyone in your family including pets.
 - Check expiration dates of medications just like you would check your fire alarms and carbon monoxide detectors – every time you change the clock ahead or back for daylight savings time.
 - If you are pregnant, make sure to include your prenatal vitamins.
 - Always read medication labels before taking or giving medications to family members including pets. Use flashlights during a power outage.
- Floodwater can contain infectious organisms. Do not eat or drink anything that has been contaminated with floodwater.
 - Do not drink well water until it is tested and found safe of contamination from germs or toxins. Wells may become contaminated during a flood.
 - Reduce the amount of water used by limiting toilet flushing, dishwashing, washing clothes, and showering.
- Make sure everyone (you, family members and pets) is up-to-date with all immunizations before a disaster.
- Use clean (uncontaminated) water (bottled or boiled) to wash, prepare, or cook food, brush your teeth, wash dishes, prepare baby formula, make ice, wash hands, and bathe with.
 - Make sure to have an adequate supply of water available for washing and drinking.
 - Boil-water for at least 1 minute. Allow the water to cool before using.

While every emergency or disaster comes with uncertainty, NJ residents can count on the NJ Poison Experts to be available 24/7/365 to answer your calls for help before, during, and after a disaster event. 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 Dr. Marcus. "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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