

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

MEDIA ALERT

Media Contacts:

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

Allergy Sufferers Beware What You Need to Know about Driving While Using Allergy Medicine

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New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

Available for Interviews

(Newark, NJ) – June 15, 2015 — Millions of people suffer each year from seasonal allergies triggered by pollen from grass, weeds, or trees. For symptom relief, many head to their local pharmacy to purchase allergy products, usually oral antihistamines. The poison experts at the NJ Poison Center want consumers to be aware that medicines, whether prescription or over-the-counter, have side effects associated with them even when used correctly. For this reason, it is extremely important to be sure to read the product label carefully before taking or giving any medicines.

Consumers must err on the side of caution when driving while using products like allergy medicines. These products can cause drowsiness and loss of attention, making driving dangerous. The message about “drugged driving” is clear...it is dangerous for you, your passengers, and others on the road. Driving while under the influence of certain prescription or OTC medicines could get you in the same kind of trouble as if you are caught driving under the influence of alcohol.

Be aware of the following side effects that make it dangerous to drive a car, bus, train, plane, boat or operate machinery.

- sleepiness/drowsiness
- blurred vision
- dizziness
- slowed movement
- inability to focus or pay attention
- fainting
- nausea
- excitability

Many medications contain more than one ingredient, some even contain alcohol. Each ingredient in a certain medicine can interact differently with the alcohol causing dangerous side effects like nausea, vomiting, drowsiness, fainting, and/or loss of coordination. Keep in mind that alcohol-medicine interactions can still occur even if they are not taken at the same time.

Poison experts suggest never mixing alcohol and medicines together. It is important to check the ingredients of all OTC and prescription medicines you plan to use. This will help avoid duplication of active ingredients, significantly reducing one's risk of serious interactions.

If you are planning on driving while taking a medicine (prescription or OTC), please discuss this with your physician, your local pharmacist, or the NJ Poison Experts at 1-800-222-1222 to find out how the medication may affect you. Do not take chances by either waiting until symptoms occur or wasting valuable time looking up information on the Internet. Every minute counts in emergencies.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

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. Stay tuned for more poison prevention week safety information.

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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