

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

MEDIA ALERT

Media Contacts:

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

Father's Day Celebrations Keep it Safe and Fun

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) – June 16, 2016 — Unintentional poisoning injuries can happen to anyone, at anytime, anywhere especially on holidays when everyone is preoccupied with preparing for company. Common dangers lurk inside and outside your home. The good news is that exposures are preventable! Be prepared and save the Poison Help Line (1-800-222-1222) in your cell phone and post it somewhere visible in your home.

Are you treating your dad, father-in-law, grandfather, or uncle to a nice home cooked meal? As you plan, shop, prepare, and cook, keep in mind there is always a risk for food poisoning when cooking at home. There is no way to be sure food is safe to eat unless you follow basic food safety practices from start to finish. The best course of action is to brush up on food safety basics before heading into the kitchen. Food poisoning can spoil his day just as easily as a burnt meal.

Quick facts about food poisoning:

- It is generally a mild illness that most commonly results from poor food handling.
- It usually occurs hours after eating contaminated food and can include nausea, fever, vomiting, stomach cramps and diarrhea.
- Once symptoms develop they may last from several hours to several days.
- It can be a serious issue for those in poor health, infants and children, the elderly, and pregnant women.

Are you celebrating with alcohol? Alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, mixed drinks, liquor, etc.) are often part of the holiday menu. Be aware that alcohol can be a deadly poison to children because they are small and their livers have not fully developed yet. If swallowed, the alcohol can lower their blood sugar potentially causing seizures, coma, and even death. This exposure can quickly be prevented by remembering to empty all beverage glasses and place them out of sight and reach of curious children. The same advice goes for your pets; alcohol can make them very sick as well.

Are you celebrating outside? Most summer celebrations happen outside on patios and in backyards. Fuel oil (most commonly used in patio torches) is a dangerous poison if ingested. The oily liquid can easily get into the lungs potentially causing pneumonia, lung damage, and even death. Even small amounts can be life-threatening. Many times children confuse fuel oils with beverages like apple juice because the two are often the same color; setting the scene for a perfect storm. Since many of the lamps/torches containing these oils are not child-resistant they must be kept away from both children and pets. When not in use, store the lamps and extra oils, the same way you would store any chemical - Lock them up and keep them out of the sight and reach.

If you have questions about food preparation/handling, foodborne illness, or any other poison exposure it's good to know help is just a phone call away. Your NJ Poison Experts are here to help on holidays and every other day. If someone has collapsed, stopped breathing, or convulsing/seizing call 911 immediately, otherwise call us (NJ Poison Center) at 1-800-222-1222. Calls are free and confidential. Help is available in more than 150 languages.

Every minute counts in poisoning situations so do not take chances by either waiting until symptoms occur or waste valuable time looking up information on the Internet. Having a poison expert give you exact instructions for your specific situation can help significantly during those critical first few minutes. A quick response by both the caller and the poison center expert can make a difference in preventing serious injury and saving lives. Save the Poison Help Line (800-222-1222) in your cell phone and post it somewhere visible in your home.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

We are social. Join us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/njpies) and Twitter (@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 Emergency Medicine 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.

###