

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

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Media can contact:

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

Does Your Classroom Pass the Test?

-- State Poison Control Center Provides Poisoning Safety Tips to School Staff --

(Newark, NJ) – “From taking mom’s vitamins or dad’s Viagra to school to share with friends to eating hand sanitizer to coming into contact with cleaning chemicals like disinfectants, the NJ Poison Experts are here to help,” says Diane Calello, MD, NJ Poison Control Center Executive and Medical Director, Rutgers NJ Medical School. The poison control center is the go-to resource for poison-related exposures and poison prevention information; providing fast, expert, medical treatment advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, year-round. “The best way for teachers and other school personnel to be prepared for a potential poisoning emergency is to save the Poison Help number in their cell phones and have it posted throughout their schools/classrooms,” says Dr. Calello.

While it’s an exciting time for children, “back-to-school” is usually extremely stressful for school staff. The hectic nature of this time lends itself to potential mishaps during the school day. It’s easy to become distracted; leaving opportunities for children to act quickly and possibly get themselves involved in something dangerous. Anything can be a poison if used in the wrong way or in the wrong amount. Does your classroom pass the test? Find out using this [Poison Safety Checklist](#).

As we know, the natural curiosity of a child will never just be contained to the home. Since children spend most of their day at school, exposures are likely to happen during school hours. The good news is that school-based poisoning exposures/injuries are preventable! The NJ Poison Control Center offers teachers, school nurses, and administrators a few simple ways to promote poison safety in their schools/classrooms; ensuring a safe learning environment each day.

- 1. Be prepared for an emergency.** Save the Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222, in your cell phone and display it throughout your school and classroom. If you suspect a student or staff member was exposed to a dangerous substance or if you have questions or concerns about a product’s safety, call poison control at 1-800-222-1222. Calls are free, confidential, and answered by experts, 24/7/365. Make sure students know where to look for the number as well. If a person is unconscious, not breathing, or having a seizure, call 9-1-1.
- 2. Practice safe use and storage habits.** Ideally, the following items should be locked up and kept out of sight and reach of children. Keep all products in their original containers with the label intact. Make a habit of reviewing the label on all potentially hazardous substances or products prior to use.
 - All medicines and pharmaceuticals, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and supplements.

- Cleaning supplies, especially those containing chlorine bleach and ammonia. Never mix cleaning chemicals – it may create highly toxic fumes!
 - Pesticides and insect repellents. Children should never handle or apply these products. Insect repellent should never be applied to children’s hands. When returning indoors, wash children’s hands with soap and water.
 - Button batteries, such as those found in certain toys and key fobs (keyless entry remotes for cars).
 - Personal care products, especially hand sanitizers.
- 3. Be aware of outdoor poisoning hazards.** During recess, sporting events, and other outdoor activities, students can get into some dangerous situations with outdoor hazards, so be prepared with these prevention and treatment recommendations:
- **Insect bites and stings:** If you have a first aid kit available, disinfect the wound with antiseptic towelettes and apply antibiotic ointment, if available. If necessary, apply direct pressure to the wound in order to stop the bleeding. Call Poison Help and a poison center specialist will help you determine if the exposed person needs medical treatment.
 - **Plants and mushrooms:** The list of plants that may be poisonous or cause severe skin irritation is long, and varies by the region where you live. Ensure you are aware of any potentially toxic plants growing around your school’s property or in your classroom. Children should never be allowed to play with or eat plants, berries, flowers or mushrooms.
 - **Pesticides:** Never use outdoor-use pesticides indoors. Pesticides meant for outdoor use can be more toxic than those designed for indoor use are. For more information about selecting, storing, using, or disposing of insect repellents, antimicrobials, and other pesticides, call NPIC (National Pesticide Information Center) at (800) 858-7378 or visit their [website](#).

Every minute counts in poisoning situations so do not take chances by either waiting until symptoms occur or looking up information on the Internet. A quick response by both the caller and the poison center expert can make a difference in preventing serious injury and saving lives.

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.

Real People. Real Answers.

Available for Media Interviews

Diane P. Calello, MD, Executive and Medical Director, New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Director of Drug Information and Professional Education, New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

About NJPIES

Chartered in 1983, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System (NJPIES) is New Jersey's only poison control center. Medical professionals such as physicians, registered nurses and pharmacists offer free consultation through hotline services (telephone, text and chat) regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention, drugs, food poisoning, animal bites and more. In addition, it tracks incidences of adverse reactions to food, drugs and vaccines in order to monitor potential public health issues and provide data to the New Jersey Department of Health, U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. NJPIES' confidential services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year. When needed, NJPIES responds to other emergent health issues by expanding hotline services.

NJPIES is designated as the state's regional poison control center by the New Jersey Department of Health and the American Association of Poison Control Centers. It is a division of the Department of Emergency Medicine of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located at Rutgers Health Sciences in Newark. NJPIES is funded, in part, by the NJ Department of Health, NJ Hospitals and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

New Jersey residents should save the Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222, in their mobile phones and post the number somewhere visible in their home. NJPIES is also available via text 8002221222@njpies.org and chat www.njpies.org.
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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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