

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)

Health Alert

Don't Get Sick after Visiting Petting Zoos

(Newark, NJ) – Fall weekends are perfect for visiting festivals, agricultural/state fairs and farms to pick pumpkins and apples. Petting zoos and animal exhibits are often attractions at these events. Unfortunately, even healthy animals can sometimes carry germs, which can lead to people getting sick after their visit. Outbreaks of E. coli infections have been associated with touching animals at these types of events.

The simplest way to prevent illness is to wash hands frequently during your visit. Since germs spread easily, be sure to wash hands immediately after petting animals, touching the animal enclosures and/or exiting the animal areas. Wash hands even if you did not touch any of the animals. Avoid eating, drinking and touching your eyes and mouth until you have washed your hands thoroughly. If running water and soap are not available, use hand sanitizers until you can get to a sink to wash properly.

Keep food and drinks out of the animal enclosures. Germs can spread to food and cause sickness. Remember not to drink or eat products sold as raw (unpasteurized); this includes apple cider, milk, cheese and juice. When buying food from a vendor, be sure it is cooked thoroughly before eating. Food poisoning is a common health risk at public events.

If you suspect illness, do not wait until symptoms occur or waste time looking up information on the Internet. Call the NJ Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 for help anytime day or night. 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.

“I want the public to be prepared for emergencies, questions or concerns,” says Diane Calello, MD, NJ Poison Control Center Executive and Medical Director, Rutgers NJ Medical School. “Keep us at your fingertips. Save the Poison Help number (1-800-222-1222) as a contact in your cell phone.”

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.

[FB](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Website](#)

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.

###