

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

MEDIA ALERT

Media Contacts:

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

10 Things Poison Experts Want You to Know When Preparing for Easter

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Available for Interviews

(Newark, NJ) – April 16, 2014 — Easter is a holiday that marks the unofficial beginning of spring in the Garden State. Since family and friends will be gathering to celebrate soon, now's the time to think ahead and make prevention a priority.

You shouldn't only lock up household chemicals and pesticides, but also vitamins, medicines (prescription, over-the-counter, dietary, and/or herbal supplements) and e-cigarettes cartridges and nicotine refills," said Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the NJ Poison Center. Parents and caregivers especially need to heed the warning from the poison experts "Children and pets will explore if it is in their sight and reach. Be sure to safely dispose of the medicines and chemicals you have decided to remove."

"Poison experts work tirelessly to safeguard the health and well-being of every NJ resident," said Dr. Marcus. "Unintentional poisoning can occur anywhere, at any time, to anyone (toddlers, teens, adults, seniors, even pets). Although such poisonings can cause serious injuries and even death, they are preventable!" Calling the poison experts first before rushing to the emergency room can potentially save the caller, the insurance company and the state of NJ millions of dollars each year.

The majority of calls to the Poison Help Line are managed at home. "No matter the reason for calling, the NJ Poison Experts offer free, confidential, expert medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year through the Poison Help Line at 800-222-1222," said Dr. Marcus.

The experts offer the following tips to avoid injury

- Always wash hands with soap and water before and after handling raw foods.
- Raw eggs may carry bacteria known as Salmonella. Cook eggs fully before decorating. If using raw eggs for cookie dough or cake batter, be sure to use eggs pasteurized in their shells so licking the spoon may be safe.
 - Use food dye to color eggs. Although most of these are non-toxic, children should be supervised at all times.
- Keep Easter grass away from young children and pets as this product can be a choking hazard and can cause intestinal obstruction if ingested.
- LOCK UP all cleaning products. Keep items in their original, child-resistant bottles/containers, out of sight and reach of children and pets.
 - Store chemicals away from food. Many injuries occur when one product is mistaken for another.
- Turn on fans and open windows when using household cleaners and chemicals. Never mix chemicals; can create a poisonous gas.
- LOCK UP all medicines (prescription, over-the-counter, dietary and herbal supplements, and vitamins).
 - Never give or take medicines in the DARK - turn on a light and use glasses if needed.
 - Avoid taking medicines in front of kids -- never call it "candy." Let kids know that only adults can give it to them.
 - Never share or take old prescription medicines.
 - Keep track of medicines prescribed for children and teens, especially those for Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD).

- Use the measuring device (dosing cup, dosing syringe or dropper) that is included with your medicine, not a utensil spoon.
- Ask babysitters, visitors and houseguests to keep coats, purses, briefcases, luggage, etc. that have medicine in them locked up and out of sight from children and pets while they are in your home.
- Avoid mixing medicine and alcohol; interaction between the two can cause serious injury.
- Chocolate can be toxic to both cats and dogs. Symptoms include convulsions, heart problems, nausea, and vomiting.
- Some holiday plants can be toxic to pets.
 - Easter Lily: Keep away from pets. Poisonous to cats.
 - Lily of the Valley: If ingested, this plant can cause heart problems.
 - Tulips and other bulb spring flowers: The bulbs can be irritating to your skin. If swallowed, they can cause distress.

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. Steven 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 Superstorm Sandy. Call 800-222-1222 to speak with 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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