



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

## NEWS RELEASE



### Media Contacts:

Alicia Gambino, MA, CHES, NJPIES Director of Public Education, 973-972-9280, [agambino@njpies.org](mailto:agambino@njpies.org)

Bruce Ruck, PharmD., NJPIES Director of Drug Information and Professional Education, 973-972-9280, [bruck@njpies.org](mailto:bruck@njpies.org)

### NJ Poison Experts Help Residents Prepare for the End of Summer

24/7 Multilingual Hotline: 1-800-222-1222

Real People. Real Answers.

Dr. Steven Marcus, Executive and Medical Director

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

*Available for Interviews*

**NEWARK, N.J. — September 1, 2011** - As Labor Day weekend approaches it marks the unofficial end of summer with vacations ending and children going back to school. This is also a time when NJ residents start thinking about yard and patio cleanup. The NJ Poison experts warn families of potential dangers they may face, from closing swimming pools and applying lawn care products to cold and flu season and picking wild mushrooms and berries. NJPIES Staff is here 24 hours a day/7 days a week to help in the event of an emergency or when you have any concerns.

#### Back to School

- Notify appropriate school personnel if your child has a chronic illness, developed any new health issues over summer recess, or an allergy especially to food.
- Be sure to know your child's school policy about handling and administering medications to students.
- Make sure children use art products safely. Art products are mixtures of chemicals so they should be used according to the directions on the label.

#### Chemicals (pool products, pesticides, fertilizers, lamp oil, kerosene, lighter fluids, automotive fluids, etc.)

- Jugs containing lamp oil **MUST** be stored in locked cabinets away from food and drinks. Lamp oil refill bottles closely resemble juice containers. It is difficult to pour the liquid directly from the bottle into the torch and frequently the user pours the liquid into a plastic or paper cup in order to then transfer it into the torch. This leaves a cup with what appears to be lemonade or apple juice sitting in it, a dangerous invitation to disaster! When accidentally taken by mouth, such lamp oils can enter the lungs causing pneumonia and death.
- Read the directions on the label before using.
- Wear protective clothing, masks, eye protection when applying chemicals. Wash clothes, footwear or any exposed skin that comes in contact with chemicals.
- Keep chemicals locked up and up high and out of reach of children and pets.
- **Do Not** apply products on a windy day.
- Store in the product's original, clearly-marked container. Always use child-resistant caps.
- Store chemicals in a cool, dry, well ventilated area with a locked entry.
- Always choose the right pesticide for the job at hand.

#### Food (Any food made with mayonnaise or egg, meat, poultry, fish, seafood, etc.)

- Cold foods should be kept refrigerated when not being served.
- **Do Not Cross-Contaminate!** Cooked foods should not be placed on any unwashed plates/containers that previously held raw meat, poultry, fish, or seafood.

- Always wash hands and counters before preparing food. Use clean utensils for cooking and serving.
- Do not let food sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

#### Medication (prescription, over-the-counter, herbal, dietary)

- Make sure to properly discard medicines that are not being used. Check expiration dates frequently on all over-the-counter and prescription medications kept in the home. Recent recommendations include combining expired or leftover medicines with used coffee grounds, kitty litter, or something else bad-tasting to children and animals. Place this in a coffee can with a lid, and discard with your household trash.
- When friends and family visit, make sure all of their medications are locked up and kept out of reach of children and pets.
- Prescription and non-prescription medicines should be lock up. Children and teens die every year because adults (parents, guardians, grandparents, etc) fail to realize the danger of keeping medicines in non-secure medicine cabinets, closets and drawers.
- Use caution when taking medications, in that some alcoholic and non alcoholic drinks may interact with medications. In addition, some medications can greatly increase the chance for severe sunburn. Check with your pharmacist or the Poison Control Center to find out if an interaction may occur.

#### Backyard Safety

- Know the name of plants and flowers in and around your home, including your yard and garden.
- Be alert to insects that may bite or sting.
- Make sure all gardening, lawn care products, and pool products are stored in locked cabinets.
- **Do Not** pick and eat berries and/or mushrooms from your backyard or fields. Even experts are often fooled by look-alikes which are toxic.

#### Fall Cleaning

- Good ventilation is the key to getting harsh fumes from cleaning products out of the house. Simply opening a window is not enough to eliminate dangerous fumes or odors. You may want to use an exhaust fan to eliminate the fumes and to circulate fresh air into the area you are cleaning.
- **Do Not** mix cleaning products. Combining these products can produce toxic fumes.
- Clean when children and pets are not present. Keep products locked up and clean up all spills immediately and thoroughly.
- Test your carbon monoxide & smoke detectors to make sure they are working.

#### **Help is Just a Phone Call Away**

If you suspect a poisoning, **CALL THE NJ POISON CENTER'S HOTLINE IMMEDIATELY at 1-800-222-1222** for treatment advice. The hotline should be called for poisoning related questions as well as for non-emergency questions regarding medications, household products, plants, environmental contaminants, or other poisons. The hotline is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The NJ poison experts recommend putting the number in all family cell phones as well as programming it as a speed dial number on landlines. In addition, the hotline number should be prominently posted near all phones in the home. 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 the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, its state-of-the-art center is located on the school's Newark campus.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies should call the bilingual toll-free hot line, 1-800-222-1222, any time. The hearing impaired may call (973) 926-8008. For more information, visit [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org) or call (973) 972-9280.

#### **About UMDNJ**

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey is the nation's largest freestanding public health sciences university, with more than 5,500 students attending. The state's three medical schools, a dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health-related professions, a school of nursing and a school of public health are housed on five campuses — Newark, New Brunswick/Piscataway, Scotch Plains, Camden and Stratford. Annually, there are more than two million patient visits at UMDNJ facilities and faculty practices at the campuses. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a level I trauma center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, a mental health and addiction services network.