

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)

Hidden Danger of Indoor Target Shooting

– Lead Exposure is a Real Risk –

(Newark, NJ) - The NJ Poison Center was contacted regarding lead poisoning in a young man with an elevated lead level of 60 mcg/dl. He decided to be tested for lead after hearing about the dangers associated with lead exposure. After investigating the potential sources of lead, it was determined the exposure occurred at an indoor shooting range due to a faulty air ventilation system.

Yes, believe it or not, adults can get lead poisoning too. Since this week is National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 22-28, 2017), it is a good time to remind everyone that although most think of children when they hear the terms lead exposure or lead poisoning, many adults have high levels of lead in their blood (lead poisoning) and do not know it. According to the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), there is no safe level of lead. Lead can cause significant damage to a person's health affecting all organs and functions of the body. Some of the damage can be permanent.

Lead gets into the body by inhaling, ingesting or absorbing lead dust/particles. Lead travels through the blood and is distributed throughout the body. Over time, lead collects and is stored in the bones. Health effects depend upon how much lead is in the body and how long the person was exposed to the lead. Some effects include high blood pressure, decreased sex drive, infertility, memory loss and difficulty concentrating, hearing and vision problems, tiredness, and irritability and mood disorder. A blood test is the only way to measure the amount of lead in the body.

Hobbyists (adults and children) who enjoy shooting at indoor gun ranges as well as employees, gun instructors, gunsmiths, police and any other professions that deal with firearms or lead are at risk for lead exposure. If an indoor gun range does not have proper ventilation, the shooter is exposed to lead dust that comes out of the gun's muzzle when fired. Lead dust can linger in the air and collect on the shooter's hands, face and clothing, where it can be inhaled, ingested or absorbed into the body.

Not only is a shooter at potential risk, so is his/her family. Lead dust/particles can be carried into vehicles and homes from contaminated skin and clothing. "Take home" lead is harmful to anyone exposed to it especially young children and pregnant women. A fetus can be exposed to lead's dangerous effects if the mother has an elevated blood lead level.

Here are some ways to stay safe and protect you and your family from lead exposure.

- Wash hands and face before you eat, drink, or smoke.
- Never eat, drink, or smoke in areas of lead dust and fumes.

- If possible, shower and change clothes and shoes before leaving. Place previously worn clothes in a bag and tie it up.
- Wash work/hobby clothes separately from the family's clothes.
- Keep children away from work and hobby areas.
- Do NOT put leaded material in your mouth.
- Keep all work and hobby materials away from living areas.

Shooting at indoor ranges is safe when there is proper air ventilation. Unfortunately, these ventilation systems occasionally fail, increasing the risk of lead poisoning to workers and shooters. Always remember to take the necessary steps to prevent lead exposure. "If you shoot or work at an indoor gun range, consider getting tested for lead," says Diane Calello, MD, NJ Poison Control Center Executive and Medical Director, Rutgers NJ Medical School.

Lead poisoning is serious. Get help right away if you suspect someone was exposed to lead. Call the NJ Poison Control Center unless the person is unconscious, not breathing, hard to wake up, or seizing then call 9-1-1. Poison control centers are a great resource for information and emergencies. 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.
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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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