



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

## NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:

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

### State Legislature Recognizes Importance of National Poison Prevention Week

Steven Marcus, MD, Executive and Medical Director,  
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New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

*Available for Interviews*

(Newark, NJ) – March 19, 2013 — The NJ Poison Center joins poison centers around the country in celebrating National Poison Prevention Week this week. National Poison Prevention Week was established by the U.S. Congress. Since 1962, the President of the United States has proclaimed the third week of March as National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) to raise awareness about the dangers of poisoning and how to prevent them.

In honor of NPPW, Assemblyman Tom Giblin (D-Essex/Passaic) visited the NJ Poison Center on the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey's Newark campus today to present Dr. Steven Marcus (at left, below), executive and medical director of NJ Poison Center, with a proclamation from both the New Jersey Senate and Assembly proclaiming March 17-23<sup>rd</sup> as National Poison Prevention Week.



We are committed to safeguarding the health and well-being of every New Jersey resident through poison prevention and free, confidential, expert medical services," said Steven Marcus, executive and medical director of NJ Poison Center. Our poison center responds to calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to help those who have been exposed to toxic substances."

This year the NJ Poison Center aims to raise awareness about the problem of prescription (Rx) and over-the-counter (OTC) misuse/abuse, possibly our nation's fastest-growing drug abuse concern (even more so than street drug abuse). Unintentional poisoning deaths from medicine misuse/abuse has risen in the last few years and now ranks as the number one cause of unintentional deaths from injuries, more than motor vehicle crashes. Teens and

young adults misuse Rx and OTC medicines to get high for two reasons: these products are readily available in home medicine cabinets; and they do not carry the stigma that street drugs do.

"We are asking New Jersey residents to **LOCK UP** all medicines (Rx, OTC, dietary, and herbal) and monitor their family's Rx and OTC medicine use by keeping track of both the number of pills in bottles and refill frequency," Marcus said. Properly dispose of all unused and/or outdated medicines. Drop-off sites are available statewide; contact the NJ poison experts at (800) 222-1222 for a site near you. Taking these steps will reduce the number of teens and young adults using medicine to get high, and will also decrease the number of toddlers and pets that unintentionally ingest medicines.

"Poisoning can occur at anytime and to anyone," Marcus said. "The NJ Poison Experts work 24/7 to help those who have been exposed to a poison or to answer the public's questions about a potential poisoning. We also reach out to our communities with information about how poisonings occur and ways to prevent them. Prevention is the best possible medicine."

"If the unthinkable happens, it's good to know help is just a phone call away," Marcus said. "Program your cell phone with the Poison Help number and post it near your home phone. 1-800-222-1222."

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

If someone is unconscious, not breathing, seizing/convulsing, bleeding profusely, difficult to arouse/wake up, etc. call 911 immediately, otherwise call the poison center at 800-222-1222. Doing online research and learning about medical conditions is a new sign of the times and a must-do for a savvy patient. But savvy patients need to know when it's important to put down the smartphone and dial an emergency number to get help. They NJ Poison Experts are always here to help with emergencies or questions involving medicines, chemicals or household products, etc. Help is available in over 150 languages; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. Program the Poison Help line (800-222-1222) into your cell phone and post it near your home and office phones too. There are no silly questions and our health professionals are always available to answer a question, quell a fear, provide advice, or intervene to get emergency services on site and prepped to provide the needed protocol in the fastest response time. When in doubt, check it out - Prevention is truly the best possible medicine. Remember, Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

## **Real People. Real Answers.**

Follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/njpies](http://www.facebook.com/njpies)) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) to be poison smart. Be a poison prevention superhero - share poison prevention tips with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

### **Call to Action – Help is Just a Phone Call Away**

NJPIES leaders urge medical professionals, parents, educators, caregivers and the general public to call the toll-free poison center hot line, 800-222-1222, with any poison related question 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. You may also chat or text in using our website, [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org). **Real People. Real Answers.**

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 (home and office). In addition, prominently post the number near all phones in the home and office.

Follow us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/njpies](http://www.facebook.com/njpies)) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc.

### **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. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus.

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](http://www.njpies.org) or call **973-972-9280**.

### **About UMDNJ**

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) is New Jersey's only health sciences university with more than 6,000 students on five campuses attending three medical schools, the State's only dental school, a graduate school of biomedical sciences, a school of health related professions, a school of nursing and New Jersey's only school of public health. UMDNJ operates University Hospital, a Level I Trauma Center in Newark, and University Behavioral HealthCare, which provides a continuum of healthcare services with multiple locations throughout the State.

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