



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

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Poisoning is a Big Deal

--Celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Poison Prevention Week --

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. — March 2012** — The New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES) will join poison centers around the country in celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Poison Prevention Week March 18 through 24, 2012.

Since 1962, the President of the United States has proclaimed the third week of March as National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) thereby focusing national attention on the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them.

"NJPIES and America's other 56 poison centers are committed to safeguarding the health and well-being of every American through poison prevention and our free, confidential, expert medical services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," stated Dr. Steven Marcus, Executive and Medical Director of NJPIES. The NJ Poison Experts help those who have been exposed to poisons or just have questions about potential poisonings (the public) and those who need consultations with poison center toxicologists about treatment options for their patients (health care providers – including emergency room doctors and nurses). "Most calls from the public originate from people's homes and many of them can be resolved over the phone following the advice of our poison experts, thereby avoiding expensive and unnecessary trips to the emergency room," noted Dr. Marcus. Studies show that U.S. poison centers save millions of dollars in medical expenses each year; every \$1 spent on poison centers saves about \$7 in unnecessary health care costs.

### SPRING INTO ACTION – MARCH 18-24, 2012

Since the first day of spring, March 20<sup>th</sup>, coincides with the beginning of National Poison Prevention Week, NJPIES encourages the public to "spring into action." It's an ideal time to take spring-cleaning to a new level and clean out your medicine cabinets, closets and pantries, garages and sheds. All medicines and toxic substances should be **locked up** and out of sight.

Poisonings span a lifetime; they can occur anywhere, at any time, to anyone (toddlers, teens, adults, and seniors). "Poisonings are a danger to us all. They don't just happen to children, in fact, most people who die from poisons are adults, not children," stated Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., NJPIES. "There are easy steps to take to protect yourself and your loved ones. As part of the week's ongoing activities, we will post daily safety tips on our Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/njpies](http://www.facebook.com/njpies)) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter))." Be a poison prevention superhero - share poison prevention tips with your family (including children), friends, and coworkers.

If the unthinkable happens, it's good to know help is just a phone call away. Program your cell phone with the Poison Help number and post it near your home and office phones too. 800-222-1222. Real People. Real Answers.

"We are using National Poison Prevention Week and the entire month of March to highlight our 24/7 accessibility to the public, stated Dr. Marcus. "There are no silly questions, and trained staff 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.” He added, “When in doubt, check it out - Prevention is truly the best possible medicine.”

### **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 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 2 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.

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