

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

## BREAKING NEWS

Media to contact:  
800-222-1222  
800-962-1253 if outside NJ

For Immediate Release  
March 5, 2018

### **State Residents Suffer CO Poisoning after Weekend's Dangerous Nor'easter Do NOT Bring Gas Generators Indoors**

**UPDATE: Several New Jersey residents found themselves hospitalized this weekend for carbon monoxide exposure. The culprit: their gas generator. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a serious and deadly threat during severe weather. Do NOT under any circumstances bring gas generators indoors or leave them near open windows, doors, garages, etc. The New Jersey Poison Control experts urge the public to heed this warning for the next storm heading our way midweek.**

**(Newark, NJ)** – As New Jersey residents prepare for flooding, gusting winds, and the possibility of snow accumulation, the New Jersey Poison Control Center braces for an uptick in poison exposures/injuries to a variety of substances as it relates to severe weather.

“Carbon monoxide poisoning is an immediate danger and more prevalent during storms of this magnitude,” says Diane Calello, MD, [NJ Poison Control Center](#) Executive and Medical Director, [Rutgers NJ Medical School's Department of Emergency Medicine](#). “Rest assured that the state's poison control center will be here to respond to your calls for help, 24/7.”

Don't be the next statistic, carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas that gives no warning – you cannot see it, smell it or taste it. To make matters worse, symptoms of CO poisoning can easily be confused with symptoms of viral illnesses like the common cold or seasonal flu. If you suspect CO poisoning, handle it as a medical emergency.

“If you are using a gas generator, please do so safely to prevent being exposed to CO gas, which can be fatal to you and those around you,” says Calello.

Below are key safety tips that may potentially save your life or the life of a loved one. For those who have social media, follow the NJ Poison Center on [FB](#) and [Twitter](#) for storm safety as well as other injury prevention tips.”

#### **Reduce your risk of CO exposure/poisoning:**

1. Only use generators outside. Keep them more than 20 feet from both you and your neighbor's home, doors, or windows. Carbon monoxide gas can blow back into a building if too close.
2. Clear snow from all heating and dryer vents.
3. Gas appliances must have adequate ventilation. If need be, keep a window slightly cracked to allow airflow.
4. Open flues when fireplaces are in use.

5. Never use the stove to heat your home/apartment.
6. Do not bring generators, pressure washers, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal-burning devices inside your home, basement, garage, carport, camper, boat cabin, or tent – or even outside near an open window or door.
7. DO NOT cook with charcoal indoors.
8. DO NOT idle a car in a closed garage. Once you pull in, immediately turn off the engine.
9. Do not idle a car in a snowbank. If stuck in the snow, make sure to clear the tailpipe and surrounding area to prevent exhaust fumes from entering the car.
10. If you do not have any carbon monoxide detectors, install them right away. If your detectors are old and/or not working properly, replace them right away. Check the batteries and replace if needed.

**If you suspect Carbon Monoxide poisoning, take immediate action:**

1. If someone is unconscious or unresponsive, get him or her out of the house and call 9-1-1 immediately.
2. Exit the house/building immediately. Do not waste time opening windows. This will delay your escape and cause you to breathe in even more dangerous fumes.
3. Contact your local fire department/energy provider.
4. Call the NJ Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 for immediate treatment advice. Do not waste time looking for information on the internet about carbon monoxide poisoning. Call us for fast, free and accurate information.

Poison control centers are a great resource for information and emergencies. Keep us at your fingertips. Save the Poison Help line (1-800-222-1222) as a contact in your phone. You can reach New Jersey's poison experts in the following ways: call 1-800-222-1222, chat via [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org), or text [8002221222@njpies.org](mailto:8002221222@njpies.org).

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

We are social. Join us on Facebook ([@NJPIES](https://www.facebook.com/NJPIES)) and Twitter ([@NJPoisonCenter](https://twitter.com/NJPoisonCenter)) for breaking news, safety tips, trivia questions, etc.

**Real People. Real Answers.**

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**Available for Media Interviews**

Diane P. Calello, MD, Executive and Medical Director, New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)  
Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Managing Director, 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](mailto:8002221222@njpies.org) and chat [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org).  
[FB](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Website](#)

### **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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