

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

## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Media can contact:

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

### Deck the Halls with Boughs of Safety

– NJ Poison Center’s Holiday Hazards List –

**(Newark, NJ)** – Another toy, another disc battery. So far this year, the NJ Poison Control Center sent over 30 children into hospital emergency rooms for swallowing a disc battery. X-rays must be taken to be sure a disc battery is not stuck in the esophagus where it may go undetected and eventually kill a child.

The holidays are an exciting time of year, but it gets hectic with cooking, entertaining, home decorating, gift buying, etc. We become distracted and forget to pay attention to what’s happening around us, especially in our homes. Mishaps and injuries often occur right under our noses. Take a step back from your busy schedule to increase your awareness of the common hazards that occur during the holiday season. The well-being of you and your family depend on it.

#### Gifts

- **Disc batteries** – These are usually found in watches, toys, games, flashing costume jewelry, singing greeting cards, remote control devices, etc. They are easy to swallow and can cause serious harm to children and pets. Besides being a choking hazard, these batteries can cause serious burns if stuck in the throat or stomach and may even cause death.
- **Toys** – Antique toys and those made outside of the United States may contain lead or other toxic substances. Look for chipping or worn paint before letting children play with them. Many toys can be a potential choking hazard for young children and pets. Look for recalls before buying toys. Visit U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission <https://www.cpsc.gov>.
- **Small magnets** – If a child consumes two or more magnets, they can attract each other, resulting in serious harm to internal organs. You must get help immediately.

#### Home

- **Alcohol (beer, wine, liquor, cocktails)** – If accidentally swallowed by children and/or pets, leftover cocktails can be fatal! Alcohol affects children and pets differently than it does adults, so even ingesting a small amount can be very toxic. Always empty beverage glasses and place them up high and out of reach of curious children and pets.
- **E-cigarettes devices and liquid nicotine** - Liquid nicotine exposures continue to concern poison center specialists. The liquid contains concentrated nicotine, which is harmful if swallowed. Even small amounts can be fatal to small children and pets. Keep these products and their refill liquids locked up, out of sight and reach.
- **Medicine** - Be sure to offer a safe, locked, out of sight place for relatives and holiday visitors to store any medicines (over-the-counter, prescription, vitamins, herbal or dietary

supplements) they may be carrying with them. Never leave medicines in purses, on nightstands or counters, or in the bathroom where children and pets can easily get them.

- **Lamp oils** – Children become confused by these oils because they are colorful and smell sweet just like a beverage. If ingested, the oils can get into the lungs, cause pneumonia and even death. Many of the lamps containing these oils are not child-resistant. Lock up lamps and oils when not in use to keep them out of sight and reach of children and pets.
- **Pets** – Make sure to keep chocolate, cocoa, candy and sugarless gum that contains Xylitol, yeast bread dough, leftover fatty meat scraps, fruitcakes with raisins and currants, alcohol and illicit drugs out of reach of your pets. Ingestion of any of these can cause serious harm and even death. Be sure to keep all wires tucked away.

#### Heating

- **Fire salts** – These create colorful flames when added to fires, but should be kept away from children as they can produce serious stomach problems if ingested.
- **Carbon Monoxide (CO)** – Don't be fooled, carbon monoxide can kill! This gas is dangerous, because it gives no warning - you cannot see it, smell it or taste it. Have detectors on every level of your home and near every sleeping area. If not vented properly or maintained regularly, heaters, fireplaces, heating systems, generators and gas appliances can contribute to rising carbon monoxide levels in your home. Symptoms of CO poisoning can easily be confused with symptoms of viral illnesses like the common cold and the flu.

“Even though the “to do” list seems to grow as the days count down, let's not forget about the importance of making the holidays injury free.” says Diane Calello, MD, [NJ Poison Control Center](#) Executive and Medical Director, [Rutgers NJ Medical School's Department of Emergency Medicine](#). “I encourage you to take a few moments to think about how you can lower the risk of unintentional injuries in your home.”

Safety is no accident, it's a choice. The best way to be prepared for questions, concerns or emergencies this holiday season is to keep Poison Control at your fingertips. Save the Poison Help number, 1-800-222-1222, as a contact in your mobile phones, and post it in a visible place in your home.

In the event of an exposure, get help immediately by calling the health professionals at the NJ Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. If a person is unconscious, not breathing, hard to wake up, or seizing call 9-1-1. Poison control centers are a great resource and the fastest way to get the medical help or information you need to prevent further injury.

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

We are social. Join us on Facebook ([@NJPIES](#)) and Twitter ([@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).  
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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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