



NEWS RELEASE

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



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Warm, Wet Weather Brings Wild Mushroom
Increased Mushroom Poisoning Calls to NJ Poison Experts

24/7 Multilingual Hotline: 1-800-222-1222
Real People. Real Answers.

Dr. 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. — August 23, 2011 — With the recent wet weather, the New Jersey Information and Education System (NJPIES) has seen an increase in calls related to mushrooms. Each year, NJ residents find themselves hospitalized after picking and eating wild mushrooms that were thought to be edible. Eating even a few bites of certain mushrooms can cause severe illness. Some symptoms of mushroom poisoning include intense vomiting and diarrhea, damage to vital organs like the liver and even death. NJPIES warns the public to refrain from eating mushrooms they find growing on their lawns or in the wild.

Many kinds of edible mushrooms have toxic "look-alikes." There is no easy way to tell the difference between poisonous and harmless mushrooms. In addition, poisonous and non-poisonous mushrooms can grow side by side. Even experienced mushroom pickers can be fooled at times, so this warning needs to be given and taken seriously. Discoveries of items of the natural world are opportunities for enjoyment, wonder, and education concerning personal safety. Children must be taught never to put wild plants, berries, nuts, or mushrooms into their mouths.

If an exposure should occur; remove any remaining parts of the mushroom from the victim's mouth and place those fragments and all mushrooms that are in the immediate vicinity of the incident into one or more paper bags (NOT plastic!). ***IMMEDIATELY*** call the NJ poison experts at 1-800-222-1222. The poison center will arrange for an expert to identify the mushroom and the center can then provide advice on management depending on the mushroom's identification. A digital photograph should be taken of the mushroom(s) in question. It helps to take a picture of the mushroom next to other objects such as a coin, ruler, etc. to provide a sense of scale.

DO NOT TAKE CHANCES; call the NJ Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. DO NOT wait until symptoms appear if exposure is suspected. Poison center experts (doctors, registered nurses, and pharmacists) are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. All calls are free and confidential and a translation service is available for over 100 languages. Real People. Real Answers. Remember, Help Is Just a Phone Call Away!

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, its state-of-the-art center is located on the school's Newark campus.

New Jersey residents seeking immediate information about treating poison emergencies should call the bilingual toll-free hot line, 1-800-222-1222, any time. The hearing impaired may call (973) 926-8008. For more information, visit 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 two 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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