

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

NEWS RELEASE

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

For Immediate Release
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NJ Poison Control Center Promotes National Poison Prevention Week PREPARE. PREVENT. PROTECT.

(New Jersey, NJ) – The New Jersey Poison Control Center and poison control centers around the country are celebrating National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW), observed March 21-27th. This week is dedicated to promoting the importance of recognizing poisoning risks, preventing poisoning exposures, and raising awareness about the life-saving services the nation's network of 55 poison control centers provide to callers on the Poison Help Hotline at 1-800-222-1222.

The Poison Help Hotline is available 24/7 anywhere in the U.S. and connects callers to their local poison control center. Toxicology specialists including nurses, pharmacists, and physicians provide callers with free confidential medical advice, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

"When life happens, calling your local poison control center for help can make a difference between a mild health effect and a serious one," says Bruce Ruck, Managing Director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, Department of Emergency Medicine](#). "Our medical staff's expertise and immediate response help to eliminate unnecessary trips to the hospital by managing most poison exposures over the phone."

Last year, the NJ Poison Control Center provided medical information and treatment advice to nearly 50,000 callers. In addition to helping the general public, our staff regularly consults with healthcare providers in emergency departments and hospitals to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of patients. Studies show patients hospitalized after a poisoning exposure with poison center assistance spend fewer days in the hospital than patients hospitalized for without poison center assistance.

"When the public first thinks of a poison control center, many believe our services only apply to little ones who get into cleaners under the sink," says Ruck. "In fact, each day our center helps callers of all ages, in any language, and for all types of poisoning exposures. It's not just about medicines, chemicals, and substances; it's also food poisoning, carbon monoxide, bites and stings, drug overdoses, plant exposures, and foreign bodies such as coins, magnets, and batteries."

In January 2020, the NJ Poison Center was called upon to assist in the fight against COVID-19. Even before cases of COVID were reported in the Garden State, the Poison Center launched the NJ COVID-19 Information Hotline. Since that time, the poison control center's medical staff and public health

professionals have assisted over 96,000 additional callers to provide up-to-date, unbiased, accurate information as well as medical guidance and links to services. The hotline has been a successful collaboration with the NJ Department of Health and a vital part of the State's COVID response team.

The New Jersey Poison Control Center, the American Association of Poison Control Centers, and Poison Control Centers across the U.S. have created virtual programs, activities, and content to engage all ages while working or learning from home. There's something for everyone!

- NPPW [Events](#) Schedule
- Follow along on social media #NPPW21
- NPPW [Toolkit](#)

The poison center's education department is dedicated to taking an active role in community outreach across New Jersey — staff and trainers/volunteers are available to provide virtual poison safety programs, prevention education materials, and attend virtual community events. Requests for community programs and education materials may be submitted [here](#).

New Jersey residents with poison-related questions or emergencies should call the poison center's Poison Help Hotline at 1-800-222-1222; Text (973-339-0702); Chat via the Poison Center's [website](#). Stay connected on social: [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#).

If someone is unconscious, not breathing, hard to wake up, or having a seizure, immediately call 9-1-1.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

Real People. Real Answers.

Available for Media Interviews

Diane P. Calello, MD, Executive and Medical Director, New Jersey Poison Control Center, Rutgers NJ Medical School's Department of Emergency Medicine

Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Managing Director, New Jersey Poison Control Center, Rutgers NJ Medical School's Department of Emergency Medicine

Lewis S. Nelson, MD, Professor and Chair of Emergency Medicine at Rutgers NJ Medical School

About New Jersey Poison Control Center / NJPIES, 1-800-222-1222

Chartered in 1983, the New Jersey Poison Information & Education System (NJPIES), known to the public as the New Jersey Poison Control Center, is the state's primary defense against injury and deaths from intentional and unintentional poisonings. It 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 at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located at Rutgers Biomedical and 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.

Hotline staff (physicians, registered nurses, and pharmacists) provide free, telemedicine consultation through hotline services (telephone, text, chat) regarding poison emergencies and provide information on poison prevention practices, drug interactions and overdoses, food poisoning, environmental chemical exposures, animal/insect bites and stings, plant and other outdoor exposures, carbon monoxide and lead poisonings, and more. NJPIES' services are free, confidential/private, available 24/7, and help is available in any language. Call 1-800-222-1222; Text 973-339-0702; [Chat](#). Stay Connected: [FB](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Website](#)

About Rutgers New Jersey Medical School

Founded in 1954, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School is the oldest school of medicine in the state. Today it is part of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and graduates approximately 170 physicians a year. In addition to providing the MD degree, the school offers MD/PhD, MD/MPH and MD/MBA degrees through collaborations with other institutions of higher education. Dedicated to excellence in education, research, clinical care and community outreach, the medical school comprises 20 academic departments and works with several healthcare partners, including its principal teaching hospital, University Hospital. Its faculty consists of numerous world-renowned scientists and many of the region's "top doctors." Home to the nation's oldest student-run clinic, New Jersey Medical School hosts more than 50 centers and institutes, including the Public Health Research Institute Center, the Global Tuberculosis Institute and the Neurological Institute of New Jersey. For more information please visit: njms.rutgers.edu.

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