

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

## ***MEDIA ALERT***

Media Contacts:

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

### **An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure -- National Poison Prevention Week 2017 --**

Diane P. Calello, MD, Executive and Medical Director  
Bruce Ruck, Pharm.D., Director, Drug Information and Professional Education  
New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES)

*Available for Interviews*

**(Newark, NJ) – March 2017**— The New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES), known to many as the NJ Poison Control Center, will join poison centers and poison prevention partners across the country in celebrating the 55th Annual National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW), March 19-25, 2017. This week is dedicated to raising awareness about poisoning in the U.S. and highlighting specific ways to prevent it. In New Jersey, NJPIES is actively involved in all aspects of poisoning and the public's health, from prevention to treatment and outreach.

The National Poisoning Prevention Council, a group of representatives from a diverse array of stakeholder organizations and the official sponsor of NPPW, has established the following overarching themes of National Poison Prevention Week: *Children Act Fast, So Do Poisons* and *Poisonings Span a Lifetime*. Additionally, the following daily themes will be observed during the week:

- Monday, March 20 – *Children Act Fast ... So Do Poisons*
- Tuesday, March 21 – *Poison Centers: Saving You Time and Money*
- Wednesday, March 22 – *Poisonings Span a Lifetime*
- Thursday, March 23 – *Home, Safe Home*
- Friday, March 24 – *Medication Safety*

Individuals and organizations who would like to follow social media content pertaining to NPPW should use and search for the hashtags #NPPW17 and #PreventPoison to learn how to prevent injuries and stay poison safe. The NJ Poison Control Center will be posting daily during the celebratory week.

From the youngest to the oldest, all people and even pets are at risk. Since most unintentional poisonings are preventable, it is important for the public to know that their local poison center is their primary defense against injury and death from poisoning. More than half of all reported poison exposures involve children five years old and younger. Although the majority of nonfatal poisonings occur in young children, the majority of fatal poisonings (deaths) occur in adults. Most are due to the misuse and abuse of legal (prescription medicine and over-the-counters) and illegal (street and synthetic drugs).

Drug overdose deaths including those from prescription and heroin remain at epidemic proportions for both New Jersey and the nation, and continue to rise. In recent months, Governor Christie has declared the opioid drug abuse crisis as a public health priority for the Garden State. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lists New Jersey among the states with the highest increase in opioid overdose deaths. In the event of a drug overdose, don't waste time. If a person is unconscious, not breathing, seizing/convulsing, bleeding, difficult to wake up, etc. call 9-1-1 immediately, otherwise call the **NJ Poison Experts at (1-800-222-1222)**.

Exposures can happen anywhere to anyone regardless of age, race, gender or socioeconomic status. While the majority of poisonings happen in the home, they can also occur in the workplace, schools, and healthcare facilities. Such injuries often involve different kinds of substances and occur in many ways—from medicines to pesticides to cleaning and car maintenance products to food poisoning and foreign bodies (disc batteries, high-powered magnets, coins). "Anything can be a poison if it's used in the wrong way, in the wrong amount, or by the wrong person; the dose determines how toxic something is or isn't in the

body," says Diane P. Calello, MD, Executive and Medical Director of NJPIES. "We want our residents to have peace of mind in knowing that we are here to help with the most routine poison exposures as well as the unusual."

U.S. poison centers are an important part of our country's public health system; providing an invaluable service that saves lives, time and money on a daily basis. Since the majority of exposures reported to poison centers are treated at the exposure site (residence), millions of dollars are saved each year in unnecessary hospital visits, reducing medical costs and lost productivity. In addition to the public, healthcare providers in emergency departments and hospitals also rely on poison center experts to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of their patients as well.

**Call to action** - Program the Poison Help Line (1-800-222-1222) into your cell phone and post it somewhere visible in your home and office. In the event of an exposure (your child, pet, or anyone), call Poison Help immediately for help. Residents can also contact the poison center by chatting via [www.njpies.org](http://www.njpies.org) or texting [8002221222@njpies.org](mailto:8002221222@njpies.org). Help is available in more than 150 languages. Time is of the essence in many situations since poisons and medicines may act very quickly. Having a poison expert give you exact instructions for your specific situation can help significantly during those critical first few minutes.

### Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

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

### Real People. Real Answers.

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#### **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 Emergency Medicine of the New Jersey Medical School of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NJPIES has a state-of-the-art center located on the school's Newark campus. NJPIES is funded, in part, by the NJ Department of Health and the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

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 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.