

MEDIA ALERT

Media Contacts:

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

Safe Trick-or-Treating: Tips from the NJ Poison Center

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Available for Interviews

(Newark, NJ) – October 24, 2016 – A 3 year old boy is out trick-or-treating with his parents and big sister when he bites into a glow stick, spilling the liquid inside onto his mouth, face, and hands. His mother calls the NJ Poison Center for help. “Halloween is one of the busiest times of the year for the doctors, nurses, and pharmacists answering calls for help on our 24 hour Poison Help line,” said Diane Calello, MD, executive and medical director of the state’s poison center. “We get calls about many things – from glow sticks to bug bites to belly aches.”

A common exposure during Halloween is the accidental ingestion of glow stick liquid. The liquid inside these glowing items is usually a clear, oily, colorless liquid. It is not toxic but can cause irritation to any part of the body that it comes into contact with, including the eyes, skin and mouth. “Parents often call 9-1-1 or spend hours in the emergency room when they could have simply called our poison experts for immediate medical advice, and stayed home” said Dr. Calello. Although such a situation rarely produces further problems, getting the liquid in the eye can be irritating and painful. This could possibly result in damage to the cornea if not washed out properly.

Another situation which causes a lot of calls are stomach aches/pains. “Parents may be concerned that symptoms are due to altered/tainted candy, when in fact it is usually just eating too much regular candy,” said Bruce Ruck, PharmD, DABT, Managing Director of the NJ Poison Center. “Keeping a watchful eye for signs of tampering or contamination is always important at Halloween.” Signs of tampering may include opened wrappers, wrapping which doesn’t match the candy inside, misspelling on the labels, or a strange appearance or odor of the candy itself.

The NJ Poison Center offers these additional safety tips for a safe and healthy Halloween.

- Children should be accompanied by an adult when “trick or treating.”
- Go only to homes of people you know.
- Avoid homemade treats - there is always a risk of food poisoning.
- Teach your child that medicine is not candy. Lock up all medications.
- Use non-toxic makeup to paint faces and body parts. Test on a small area of skin to be sure it will not cause an allergic reaction.
- Handle dry ice with care because it can cause significant damage (burns) if ingested or touches the skin. Store it safely in an insulated container. Always use protective clothing such as appropriate gloves when handling dry ice.
- Any item containing alcohol should be kept out of reach of children and pets. This includes opened bottles, unfinished beverage cups, etc.
- Make sure any items that can cause choking, such as hard candy, are given only to children school-aged or older. Throw out candy wrappers before your young children or pets swallow them and choke.
- Children should not give treats to pets; chocolates and raisins can be poisonous to animals.

Mishaps can occur at any time. Do not take chances by waiting until symptoms happen. While family members and internet searches may offer some answers, these are not the best ways to get immediate help. If someone is unconscious, not breathing, seizing/convulsing, bleeding profusely, difficult to arouse/wake up, etc. call 911 immediately, otherwise call the NJ Poison Center at 1-(800)-222-1222.

Calling the poison center is always the fastest way to get the medical help or information you need to prevent further injury. Time is important in such situations so program the Poison Help line (1-800-222-1222) as a contact in your mobile phone and post it somewhere in your home, like on your refrigerator or near your home phone.

Help is available to NJ residents anytime day or night, even on weekends and holidays. Remember, services are fast, free, confidential, and multilingual. Call 800-222-1222, chat www.njpies.org, or text 8002221222@njpies.org; the hearing impaired may also use their TTY and call 973-926-8008.

Help is Just a Phone Call Away!

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

Real People. Real Answers.

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 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.