

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

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contacts:
800-222-1222 (800-962-1253 outside NJ)

Safe “Trick or Treating” Glow Stick Liquid & Other Safety Tips

Steven Marcus, 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) – October 26, 2015 — Don’t let innocent fun turn into a disaster. “Taking simple precautions can go a long way in keeping families safe,” says Steven Marcus, MD, executive and medical director of the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System, a division of the Department of Emergency Medicine of the New Jersey Medical School of Rutgers University.

“Being prepared and informed about how to avoid a poisoning or how to handle a possible poisoning can ensure a positive outcome,” Marcus says. “Parents often call 9-1-1 or spend hours in the emergency room when they could have called our poison experts for immediate medical advice. If you suspect a poisoning, don’t take chances by waiting until symptoms occur or relying on family members or internet searches when you might need immediate help. Give the Poison Helpline a call first, call 1-800-222-1222 to reach an expert!”

To help parents be prepared and prevent possible poisonings, Marcus addresses the answers to the most frequently questions posed to the Poison Helpline experts on Halloween.

Are glow sticks dangerous if they break or if the liquid is swallowed?

The substance inside these glowing items is usually *dibutyl phthalate*, a clear, oily, colorless liquid. It is low in toxicity but can cause irritation to any part of the body that it comes into contact with, including the eyes, skin and mouth.

Children should not be allowed to chew on or break open glow sticks or any other glow-in-the-dark products since it can cause nausea and burning if swallowed. Don’t be alarmed if a child’s lips and tongue glow for a few minutes. Wipe the mouth with a clean wet washcloth; go over the tongue and around the gum line. Have the child drink up to four ounces of water. To be safe, do not give glow products to children under the age of three. If the liquid is splashed into an eye, irrigate it with a generous amount of room temperature water for at least 10 minutes. Exposure could possibly result in damage to the cornea if not washed out properly. If it touches the skin, wash affected areas well with soap and water. Never put these products in a microwave.

How can parents make sure the treats their children receive are safe?

Teach children not to consume food items, drinks or treats they accept, until an adult has thoroughly checked them. Throw away any treats that are spoiled or a choking hazard, such as hard candy with small children. Check the wrappers: If the candy is unwrapped, in torn or faded wrapping or not in its original packaging, throw it out. When in doubt, don't hesitate, throw it out. Dispose of tin foil and cellophane candy wrappers properly to avoid children and pets choking on them if swallowed. Also, do not allow children to give treats to pets – chocolates and raisins may be poisonous to animals.

How can parents safely use Halloween makeup?

Use non-toxic makeup to paint faces and body parts. Test face makeup in a small area of the skin first – preferably on the arm – to check for allergic reactions before applying it to the face. Do not apply make up to the eyes or surrounding area. Avoid decorating the face or body with products that aren't intended for the skin. Throw out any make up that has a bad smell – this could be a sign of contamination. Remove makeup before bedtime to prevent possible skin and eye irritation.

What are the dangers of dry ice? Dry ice can cause significant burns if ingested or if it touches the skin. Always use protective clothing, such as leather gloves, when handling dry ice to prevent frostbite. Store it safely in an insulated container, not in the freezer or an unventilated area.

What are other safety considerations?

Children should be accompanied by an adult when trick-or-treating. Have the trick or treaters where light colored, preferably reflective, costumes. Alcohol can be dangerous to children, especially to little ones; make sure that opened containers, unfinished beverages and all other items containing alcohol are out of reach. This is also a good time to teach your child that medicine is not candy and to be sure your medications are locked up.

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.

###