



FLORIDA/USVI POISON INFORMATION CENTER - JACKSONVILLE

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STAYING SAFE DURING THE SUMMER: TIPS FROM THE POISON CONTROL CENTER

JACKSONVILLE, FL — As the July 4th holiday approaches and the summer season gets into full swing, the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center – Jacksonville wants to remind you of a few important tips to keep you and your family safe.

“During the summer break, kids are out of school and families are spending time outside, which leads to an increase in poison exposures,” said Dr. Jay L. Schauben, Director of the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center – Jacksonville. “We see a spike in snake bites, jellyfish stings, other insect bites, and misuse of insect repellents.”

The poison control center staff in Jacksonville is providing the following advice:

Handling Fireworks:

- Fireworks contain chemicals that are poisonous if ingested and dangerous as explosives.
- If a pet or child puts any part of a firework in their mouth (including pop-its and snakes), rinse their mouth with water and call the poison control center at 1-800-222-1222. If traumatic injury arises from its explosive force, seek medical attention immediately.

Snake Bites:

- Call the poison control center (or 911, if unarousable, convulsing, or stopped breathing) if someone has been bitten by one of the six indigenous venomous snakes of Florida: pygmy rattlesnake, cottonmouth (water moccasin), Eastern diamondback rattlesnake, canebrake (timber) rattlesnake, copperhead, or coral snake.
- If bitten by a snake, remove jewelry and tight clothes, immobilize the extremity if possible, keep affected area at or below the heart, and wash the area gently.
- DO NOT feed the victim, make cuts or place ice on the bitten extremity, or apply a tourniquet.

Additional Outdoor Hazards:

- At the beach, bring a spray bottle of vinegar in case of jellyfish stings. If you're stung, call the poison control center for specific treatment advice.
- If bitten by a spider, call the poison control center immediately.
- For usual insect stings, including fire ants, bees, wasps, and caterpillars, initially apply a baking soda paste. Then call the poison control center for more specific treatment advice.
- Treat all wild mushrooms as poisonous unless you are absolutely certain they are safe to eat.

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Insect Repellent Usage:

- Read and follow product instructions carefully; some products are not meant to be applied to the skin.
- Do not apply onto a child's hands, eyes, mouth, or cut/irritated skin; spray repellent onto adult's hands then apply to child's face.
- Do not use combination sunscreen/insect repellent products. Sunscreen needs to be reapplied every two hours, but repellent should not be reapplied.
- DEET should not be used on children younger than two months old.
- After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water.

For more information or to schedule an interview, the media may contact Brie Burge, Media Relations/Education Associate, at 904.244.7978 or burge@poison.ufl.edu.

The mission of the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville is to provide exceptional care for individual patients and for supporting public health through information, surveillance, education, and research. Experts staff the Poison Help Hotline at 800.222.1222 that provides free, confidential, expert medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year from toxicology specialists, including nurses, pharmacists, physicians, and poison information providers.

The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville is a cooperative effort between the University of Florida College of Medicine, UF Health Jacksonville, the University of Florida Health Science Center - Jacksonville, and the State of Florida, Department of Health, Children's Medical Services. The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville is designated as an accredited regional poison control center by the American Association of Poison Control Centers. To learn more, visit floridapoisncontrol.org, like us on [Facebook](#), and follow us on [Twitter \(@FloridaPoison\)](#).

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