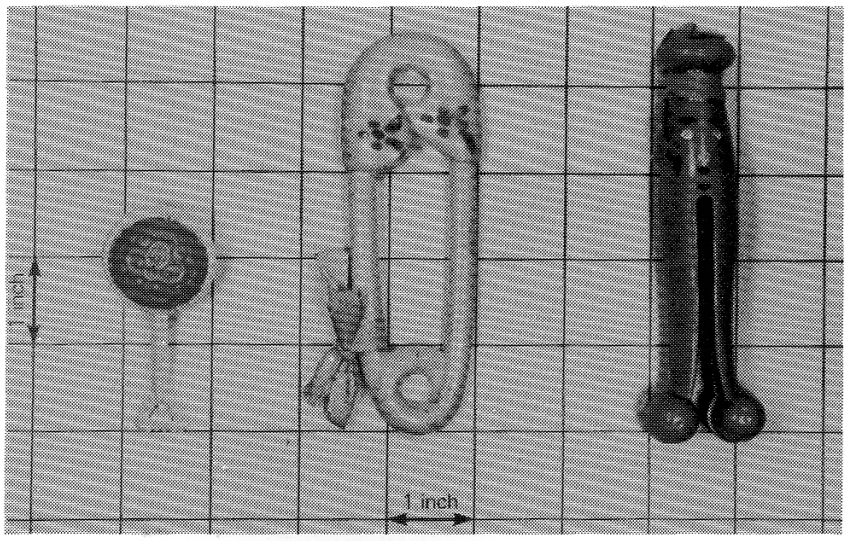
Consumer Product Safety Alert

FROM THE U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

CPSC Warns Consumers of Dangers With Infant Rattles



The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is concerned about several rattles recently sold as novelty items or decorations for cakes, gifts, floral arrangements, etc., which do not meet the safety requirements the Commission has established for rattles. These novelty rattles, such as the ones shown above, are small enough to enter an infant's mouth and become lodged in the back of the throat. To prevent choking accidents, CPSC urges consumers to discard these hazardous rattles.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) warns consumers about potential choking hazards associated with several rattles being sold as novelty items and decorations.

In 1978, after receiving reports of several choking deaths involving children's rattles, CPSC established safety requirements which all rattles must meet. The regulations require that rattles be large enough so that they cannot enter an infant's mouth and become lodged in the back of the throat, and be constructed so they will not separate into small pieces which can be swallowed or inhaled.

While all rattles intended for children must meet these regulations, the CPSC has become aware of some non-complying rattles which have been sold recently as party favors or as decorations on gifts, floral arrangements, cakes, etc. These rattles could be removed and given to infants, although they do not meet the safety requirements the CPSC has established. Distributors have been advised that these rattles are banned; they have stopped selling the rattles and have begun recalling them from retailers. CPSC is concerned, however, about the possibility of children choking on rattles that may still be in consumers' hands.

The CPSC warns consumers to check all rattles carefully before giving them to a child. An infant's mouth is extremely pliable and can stretch to hold larger shapes than one might expect. To test rattles for minimum permissible size, CPSC uses a device which has an oval opening that measures approximately 1-3/8 inches (35mm) by 2 inches (50mm), and is 1-3/16 inches (30mm) deep. Any portion of a rattle, such as its handle, which passes through this opening is small enough to enter an infant's mouth and become lodged in the back of the throat. To reduce the chance of a choking accident, parents should choose rattles which are at least as large, and preferably larger, than these dimensions.

CPSC recommends that consumers who have hazardous rattles stop using them immediately. Consumers may wish to check with the retail store where the rattle was purchased regarding possible refund or recall programs.

For further information, consumers may call the CPSC's toll-free hotline on 800-638-CPSC. The teletypewriter number for the hearing impaired is 800-638-8270.