



CPSC Safety Alert

Ingested Magnets Can Cause Serious Intestinal Injuries

Small magnets, like those found in magnetic building sets and other toys, can kill children if two or more are swallowed. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is aware of at least 33 cases of children being injured from ingesting magnets. A 20 month-old died, and at least 19 other children from 10 months to 11 years old required surgery to remove ingested magnets. In many cases, magnets had fallen out of larger components of toys. Some children swallowed intact toy components containing magnets.

If two or more magnets or magnetic components or a magnet and another metal object (such as a small metal ball) are swallowed separately, they can attract to one another through intestinal walls. This traps the magnets in place and can cause holes (perforations), twisting and/or blockage of the intestines, infection, blood poisoning (sepsis), and death. When multiple magnets are ingested surgery is required to remove the magnets and sometimes sections of the intestines need to be removed.

CPSC cautions the public that small magnets found in other non-toy products may present the same hazard.

To help prevent serious magnet ingestion injuries:

- Seek immediate medical attention if you suspect your child may have swallowed a magnet.
- Look for non-specific abdominal symptoms - abdominal pains, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, etc.
- Note that objects in x-rays may appear as a single object that could actually be multiple magnetic pieces separated by trapped intestinal walls.
- Keep small magnets and small pieces containing magnets away from young children who might mistakenly, or intentionally, swallow them.
- Look out for loose magnetic pieces – regularly inspect toys and children’s play areas for missing or dislodged magnets.
- Check www.cpsc.gov to make sure your children’s magnetic toys are not recalled products.

