

NASPGHAN Statement on High-Powered Magnet Court Ruling

The North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) is shocked and deeply disappointed by the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit to overturn the federal government's strict safety standard for small, high-powered magnets. This legal ruling does not change the hazard these products pose to children.

Representing pediatric gastroenterologists who are on the front lines of treating children who accidentally ingest these magnets, NASPGHAN is calling on U.S. retailers, including online retailers, to boycott the sale of products that do not meet the safety standard for magnet sets issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission in 2014.

Prior to the new safety standard, pediatric gastroenterologists witnessed a rise in the number of ingestions of high-powered magnets by toddlers and teenagers, often with severe medical consequences. These magnets were sold as part of magnet sets sold as desk toys.

Kids ingest a lot of things they shouldn't. High-powered magnet ingestions are different than other ingested foreign bodies. Most foreign bodies will pass through the digestive tract without incident. When two or more magnets are ingested, their attractive force allows the magnets to "find" each other once inside the digestive tract. Consequently, there is a high risk of a fold of intestine becoming trapped between the magnets. When this occurs, ulceration and bowel perforation can occur and lead to death.

NASPGHAN recommends that high-powered magnet sets should not be stored or used in homes or other settings where children are present. Because these high-powered magnets often come in sets of 100 or more, missing magnets are not easily accounted for and can get lost in carpet or furniture where they can be found by small children.

Children should receive immediate medical attention for a known or suspected magnet ingestion. Consumers and health care providers are strongly encouraged to report incidents of ingestions to www.saferproducts.gov.