

American Academy
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For Immediate Release: November 27, 2017

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On Cyber Monday, Leading Pediatric Organizations Warn Parents Not to Buy Dangerous Magnet Sets

Groups join consumer, safety advocates in letter to CPSC urging more action to prevent child injury

Washington, DC—Today, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN), Consumer Federation of America (CFA), Consumers Union (CU), Kids In Danger (KID), Public Citizen (PC), and the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) [sent a letter](#) to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) applauding its October decision to stop the sale of high-powered magnet sets, sold under the brand name Zen Magnets, and urging even stronger action to prevent known harms to children associated with high-powered magnetic sets in the future.

Unlike those typically found on refrigerators, these magnet sets are composed of tiny high-powered magnet balls or cubes, often with 200 or more to a set. When two or more magnets are swallowed, their attractive force allows them to find each other across or between different segments of the digestive system. For example, connections can develop between the stomach and the small intestine or between the small intestine and the colon, putting any person who swallows them at high risk for major complications and injury. A child [died](#) in 2014 from complications related to ingesting a high-powered magnet product.

“Pediatricians’ number one goal is to keep children safe. High-powered magnets have caused unnecessary surgeries, debilitating injuries, irreversible gastrointestinal damage and other lifelong health impacts in infants, children and adolescents,” said AAP President Fernando Stein, MD, FAAP. “Pediatricians have been ringing an alarm bell about these dangerous magnets since we first recognized the damage they cause, and we urge parents to avoid purchasing them as gifts for children during the holiday season.”

In its letter, the medical, consumer and public safety groups welcome the CPSC’s recent decision to stop the sale of Zen Magnets, but urge the commission to establish a safety standard for small rare-earth magnet sets moving forward. Given that other brands of high-powered magnets in addition to Zen Magnets are still being sold at stores around the country, and given that litigation regarding the fate of the stop-sale order continues, the groups urge the CPSC to order stop-sales of other sets immediately while also working toward a new rule.

“We cannot allow these life-threatening magnets to find their way back into the hands of children,” said NASPGHAN President James Heubi, MD. “History has taught us that pediatric gastroenterologists will see an increase of magnet ingestion cases during the holidays. High-powered magnet sets do not make good gifts and their ingestion can have tragic consequences. We applaud CPSC for taking steps to pull Zen Magnets off the market and urge them to do all they can to keep these and other equally dangerous magnet products off store

shelves once and for all.”

As holiday shopping season kicks off, AAP and NASPGHAN warn parents that the risk of these products does not come simply from purchasing them for children as gifts, but also from younger siblings finding and ingesting the high-powered magnets, or teens using the magnets to mimic piercings. The groups urge parents to report any incidents or injuries to children caused by these high-powered magnet sets to www.SaferProducts.gov, and to look for more information at CPSC’s [magnet information center](#) and HealthyChildren.org.

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The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 66,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. For more information, visit www.aap.org and follow us on Twitter @AmerAcadPeds.

The North American Society of Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN) is comprised of more than 2,000 pediatric gastroenterologists in 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Mexico and 8 provinces in Canada. The mission of NASPGHAN is to advance understanding of normal development, physiology and pathophysiology of diseases of the gastrointestinal tract and liver in children, improve quality of care by fostering the dissemination of this knowledge through scientific meetings, professional and public education, and policy development, and serve as an effective voice for members and the profession. For more information, visit www.naspghan.org