



NEWS RELEASE

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AAPCC and Poison Centers Issue Warning About Concentrated Packets of Laundry Detergent

ALEXANDRIA, VA. – The American Association of Poison Control Centers and the experts at America’s 57 poison centers are urging the public, especially parents, to keep highly concentrated “single dose packs” of laundry detergent up and away from children, according to Debbie Carr, AAPCC executive director.

Poison centers are reporting a recent uptick in calls about exposures of children to laundry detergents packaged in small, single-dose packets. Some young children and toddlers who swallow these small packets have become very ill and have required hospitalization. Other children have gotten the product in their eyes, resulting in significant eye irritation. Some children have been exposed when the product burst after putting it into their mouths.

The following are examples of exposures to children who have become ill from concentrated laundry detergent packets:

- Ten minutes after a 20-month-old swallowed a laundry detergent packet, the child developed profuse vomiting, wheezing and gasping and then became unresponsive to even painful stimuli.
- A 15-month-old who bit into a pack and swallowed a mouthful had profuse vomiting and, after arrival at a hospital, had to be put on a ventilator for airway protection.
- A 17-month-old bit into a packet and then rapidly developed drowsiness, vomited, breathed the product into the lungs, and had to be put on a ventilator.

“The rapid onset of significant symptoms is pretty scary,” said Dr. Michael Beuhler, medical director of the Carolinas Poison Center. “Other laundry detergents cause only mild stomach upset or even no symptoms at all. Although we aren’t certain what in the product is making the children sick, we urge all parents and caregivers to make sure laundry detergent packs are not accessible to young kids.”

The American Association of Poison Control Centers recommends the following steps:

- Always keep detergents locked up and out of the reach of children.
- Follow the specific disposal instructions on the label.

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- If you think a child has been exposed to a laundry detergent packet, call your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222 immediately.

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The AAPCC supports the nation's 57 poison centers in their efforts to treat and prevent drug, consumer product, animal, environmental and food poisoning. Members staff the Poison Help hotline at 1-800-222-1222 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. In addition, the AAPCC maintains the only poison information and surveillance database in the United States, providing real-time monitoring of unusual poisoning patterns, chemical exposures and other emerging public health hazards. The AAPCC partners with federal agencies such as EPA, HRSA and the CDC, as well as private industry.

To learn more, visit www.aapcc.org, like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, or read our blog at aapcc.wordpress.com. To join your voice with other poison center supporters, register for the AAPCC advocacy network at www.capwiz.com/aapcc – click on “Action E-List.”

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