

*** Consumer Reports * American Academy of Pediatrics *
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Contact: David Butler or Kara Kelber, Consumer Reports, [\(202\) 462-6262](tel:(202)462-6262)

Devin Miller, American Academy of Pediatrics [\(202\) 724-3308](tel:(202)724-3308)

Nancy Cowles, Kids in Danger, [\(312\) 595-0649](tel:(312)595-0649)

Rachel Weintraub, Consumer Federation of America, [\(202\) 387-6121](tel:(202)387-6121)

Ed Mierzwinski, U.S. PIRG, [\(202\) 461-3821](tel:(202)461-3821)

Consumer Advocates and Pediatricians Gravely Concerned with Court Ruling Overturning Ban on High-Powered Magnets

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Consumer groups and pediatricians today expressed grave concerns with a decision by a panel of judges on the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals to vacate a Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) rule to ban dangerous, high-powered magnets.

High-powered magnet sets, marketed under names such as Zen Magnets, are composed of tiny high-powered magnet balls or cubes, often with 200 or more magnets to a set. When more than two magnets are swallowed, their attractive force (flux) allows them to find each other across or between different segments of the digestive system. For example, connections can occur between the stomach and the small intestine, between the small intestine and the colon, or across loops of bowel. The CPSC passed a strong standard in 2014 making these magnets safer and preventing the sale of unsafe magnets after children suffered critical injuries and even died after ingesting these magnets.

Laura MacCleery, Vice President of Policy and Mobilization for Consumer Reports, said, “Simply put, this rule exists to save children’s lives. We have seen too many cases where young children swallowed these tiny yet powerful magnets masquerading as adult products and suffered serious medical consequences – even death. These are not the usual, run-of-the-mill refrigerator magnets and the CPSC’s safeguards are critical to protect the public. As we approach the holidays, it is more important than ever that parents be aware of how dangerous these products are. We urge consumers not to buy them or keep them around, especially if they have children that live with them or visit them.”

Benard P. Dreyer, MD, FAAP, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said, “As pediatricians, our 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. Pediatricians have been ringing an alarm bell about these dangerous magnets since we first recognized the damage they cause, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s (CPSC) ban on these high-powered magnets was a much-needed step in the right direction. The court’s ruling to overturn the CPSC ban on high-powered magnets jeopardizes children’s health and safety; we simply cannot afford to let these life-threatening magnets find their way into the hands of our children.”

Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids in Danger (KID), said, “Children have died after ingesting these small powerful magnets – and scores of others face life-altering injuries. In enacting this rule, CPSC acted in the best interest of children’s safety. This court action will lead to additional injuries. We urge consumers to keep all magnet sets away from children.”

Rachel Weintraub, Legislative Director and General Counsel at Consumer Federation of America, said, “We are profoundly disappointed by this decision. Without a doubt, this decision puts children at risk. The hazards associated with rare earth magnets are severe and hidden. Children suffer severe health consequences that could result in death or lifelong health problems. Caregivers cannot always identify when specific small magnets are missing nor that their child ingested them. Parents should make sure to keep these unsafe products out of children's reach and preferably out of their homes.”

Ed Mierzwinski, Consumer Program Director, US PIRG, said, “The facts on risks to children and teens posed by small, powerful magnets are very clear. The CPSC rule was designed to protect kids the only way it could: by banning an inherently dangerous product. Sadly, this court has opened the door to more injuries and deaths.

[Consumer Reports](#) is an independent, nonprofit organization that works side by side with consumers to create a fairer, safer, and healthier world. As the world's largest independent product-testing organization, Consumer Reports uses its more than 50 labs, auto test center, and survey research center to rate thousands of products and services annually. Founded in 1936, Consumer Reports has over 7 million subscribers to its magazine, website, and other publications.

[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.

[Kids In Danger \(KID\)](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety. KID was founded in 1998 by the parents of sixteen-month-old Danny Keysar who died in his Chicago childcare home when a portable crib collapsed around his neck.

[Consumer Federation of America](#) is an association of more than 250 nonprofit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.

[U.S. PIRG](#) serves as the federation of state Public Interest Research Groups. PIRGs are non-profit, non-partisan public interest advocacy organizations that take on powerful special interests on behalf of their members.