



IMPROVING
CHILDREN'S
PRODUCT
SAFETY



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Consumer Advocates and Doctors Applaud CPSC's Effort to Protect Children from Hazardous High Powered Magnets CPSC Sues Maxfield and Oberton to Stop the Sale of Buckyballs

WASHINGTON D.C. – Consumer advocates and pediatric gastroenterologists applauded the Consumer Product Safety Commission's 3-1 vote today in favor of issuing an Administrative Complaint against the manufacturer of Buckyballs, Maxfield and Oberton Holdings.

High powered magnets, such as Buckyballs, are bb-shaped smooth balls or cubes that connect to one another with a strong magnetic bond. The magnets are individual balls that are sold in packages of many individual balls. These products were originally sold as toys to children over 13 years of age, but now, after a recall in 2010, these products are sold to teens and adults age 14 and older. The new warning label that has appeared on the package of Buckyballs since the recall has not resulted in a decrease in serious injuries to children. In November of 2011, CPSC issued a safety warning to consumers about this product but the injuries continue to occur.

These products are of great interest to children of all ages. Younger children mistakenly believe they are candy while older children use these products as faux facial piercings. The consequences of inhaling or swallowing more than one of these powerful magnets are severe. Children who swallow two or more magnets are at risk of developing serious injuries such as small holes in the stomach and intestines, intestinal blockage, blood poisoning, and even death. Removing magnets surgically often requires the repair of the child's damaged stomach and intestines. In the past, emergency room physicians have likened the internal damage caused by magnets to that of a bullet wound.

"We applaud CPSC for their strong action today. These products have caused serious injuries to children. These incidents should not happen. It is unfortunate that the manufacturer is refusing to voluntarily recall these products that are so horribly injuring children," stated Rachel Weintraub, Director of Product Safety and Senior Counsel with Consumer Federation of America.

"The North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition strongly supports the action taken today by the Consumer Product Safety Commission," said Athos Bousvaros, President-Elect of the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN). Many of our member physicians have spent hours removing these high powered neodymium magnets from the stomach of innocent infants and children to reduce the risk of abdominal surgery. In spite of warnings by companies, there is no effective way to keep these tiny, shiny "adult toys" out of the reach of children. If they stay on the market,

infants and children will continue to swallow these magnets, and intestinal damage requiring surgery will continue to occur.”

“We commend Chairman Tenenbaum and Commissioners Adler and Northup for issuing this complaint against Maxfield and Oberton today,” stated Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger. “Earlier this year, KID conducted a study of magnet incidents reported to CPSC and found that almost half (45%) of incidents involving bb-style magnets required surgery, compared to only a third of those incidents involving other magnetic toys. These injuries should be prevented and CPSC did the right thing today to protect children.”

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The Consumer Federation of America is a nonprofit association of nearly 300 consumer groups that, since 1968, has sought to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education. www.consumerfed.org

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. www.KidsInDanger.org

Incorporated in 1972, the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN), with more than 1700 members, is the leading society in the field of pediatric digestive diseases. www.naspghan.org