

Rotten Cotton: The latest and lamest diet fad

By ACSH Staff — November 25, 2013



Definition: Teenager A human entity comprising a certain age group that

is explicitly placed on earth for the sole purpose of exploring the boundaries of poor judgement.

While this is tongue-in-cheek, a new diet fad that has become very popular isn't funny at all.

Earlier this year it was The Cinnamon Challenge, a splendidly bad idea where (mostly) teens filmed themselves on YouTube trying to swallow a spoonful of dry cinnamon. It's not pretty to watch (choking and/or vomiting), and while we know of no deaths, there were cases where hospitalization was required, with the possibility of permanent lung damage.

This one is worse. It's called the Cotton Ball Diet, and it is very dangerous. This bad idea consists of (mostly) teenage girls soaking cotton balls in orange juice and swallowing them. The cotton is supposed to give the sensation of fullness resulting in weight loss.

This is nothing other than a really misguided attempt to lose weight, and given the already serious problem of eating disorders among teenage girls, this is the last thing they need.

ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava says, It's almost unbelievable that kids would actually eat cotton balls, but then see the definition of teenager above. This so-called diet might easily lead to emergency surgery to relieve intestinal blockages, undoubtedly not the best way to lose weight.

There are a number of factors contributing to the riskiness of this fad: 1) the possibility of choking; 2) this can lead to a bezoar, a mass that obstructs the intestines, which can be fatal if it is not surgically removed; 3) of less urgency, it is possible that the cotton can absorb nutrients and vitamins, leading to malnutrition.

Fortunately, this dangerous experiment is now receiving extensive news coverage. We strongly urge parents to be aware of this behavior. This is no laughing matter.

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