

Detergent pods pose serious poison risk for young children

By ACSH Staff — November 10, 2014



Laundry detergent pods went on the market in 2010. They are

now manufactured by at least 10 brands including Tide Pods and All Mighty Pacs, and consumers have quickly embraced this new, easy way to do laundry, as evidenced by the \$525 million spent in 2013 on just these two products. However, the colorful packaging which resembles candy or a teething toy according to some critics, actually makes these pods very dangerous to young kids.

Researchers [led by Dr. Marcel](#) ^[1] J. Casavant, the medical director of the poison center at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, compiled cases reported to the National Poison Data System related to the laundry pods from 2012 to 2013. They found about 17,000 reports of children under the age of 6 who were injured from the pods, either through ingesting the contents or squirting the detergent into their eyes. The most common signs of ingestion were vomiting, becoming lethargic, coughing or choking, but over 700 children were hospitalized and half required intensive care. Furthermore, over 100 children required intubation and so far, two children have died.

In response to concerns, manufacturers have worked to make the packaging childproof, by making the pods opaque so children cannot see the colorful solution inside or putting triple-latch lids on each pod to make it harder to open.

However, Dr. Fred M. Henretig, an emergency medicine doctor and senior toxicologist at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia [says these changes](#) ^[2] are not enough. The products should have true child-resistant packaging. The most important factor in decreasing bad outcomes for kids is to decrease the toxicity of the product itself, or decrease the ability for it to get into the hands or mouths of young children.

Currently, ASTM International, a nonprofit standards developer, is working with manufacturers to establish standards for packaging of these pods, but these standards may take one to two years to develop.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross had this to say: The number of young children who have been hurt by

these laundry pods is a serious concern, and clearly this product must be re-evaluated to make it safe for use for those with young children. [This is in contrast to the concern](#) [3] by the CDC about e-liquid poisoning. The fact is that e-liquid poisoning is much more rare than the CDC and the media want you to believe. The CDC is simply trying to promote their own agenda by continuing to fulminate about the hypothetical and exaggerated risks of e-cigarettes. This is in fact in the worst interests of public health, since their obsession with e-cigs seems to have made them blind to America's real massive public health problem: cigarette smoking. However, we are very much in favor of regulating e-cigarettes as the consumer products they are, mandate childproof packaging, age restriction on sales and marketing, reliable manufacturing processes and accurate labeling. Similar standards should of course be applied to this starker hazard: detergent pods.

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[1] <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2014/11/05/peds.2014-0057.abstract?sid=272f90b7-847e-4591-85f1-ad9ee27c367c>

[2] <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/10/health/detergent-pods-pose-risk-to-children-study-finds.html>

[3] <http://acsh.org/2014/04/sky-falling-warns-cdc-largely-imaginary-nicotine-poisonings/>