

Laundry detergent capsules

#Laundrysafe

An OECD Global Awareness-raising Campaign on Laundry Detergent Capsules (16 to 23 March 2015) aims to highlight the risks posed by a product that is present in many households: laundry detergent capsules (or packets). These products can be attractive to children and pose serious dangers if not handled and stored safely. Over 16.000 incidents are recorded annually.



The campaign aims to inform consumers, especially parents, to use and store laundry detergent capsules safely, keeping them away from children; businesses are asked to follow/share safety related best practices as well as to help raise awareness on the safe use of laundry capsules.

This campaign involves 23 consumer product safety authorities from 5 continents: European Commission (project leader), Australia, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland,



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Japan, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain, United Kingdom, United States. It has the full support of ANEC.

In addition to activities to raise awareness, some jurisdictions have introduced specific regulatory requirements for these products. For example, the European Commission recently adopted a [Regulation](#) on additional safety measures for liquid laundry detergents capsules which will apply from 1 June 2015.

The product and the hazards

Laundry detergent liquid capsules (or packets) contain concentrated detergent for single use. The content, protected by a membrane, is released once it comes in contact with moisture during a wash.

Yet, laundry detergent liquid capsules (or packets) are small, tactile and often colourful which makes them attractive to children - especially toddlers - who are tempted to ingest play with them or even ingest them. A laundry liquid capsule can burst in a child's hand, especially when it is wet or moist. It can also rapidly dissolve with moisture and may burst in a child's mouth in only ten seconds, causing severe injuries.

The main **consequences** of exposure can be:

- In case of **ingestion**: severe vomiting, coughing, respiratory disorders, nausea, drowsiness and rash.
- In case of **contact with the eyes**: conjunctivitis, pain in the eye, eye irritation.
- In case of **contact with the skin**: rash, skin irritation, chemical burn.

Safety messages for parents and carers

SAFE STORAGE

- Store these products high, out of reach and out of sight of children;
- If stored in lower accessible cabinets/cupboards, these should be secured with child resistant locks;
- Keep the capsules/packets in their original container, fully closed between uses.

SAFE USE

- Carefully read the labels on the packaging;
- Do not use the capsules/packets while children are close by and do not allow or invite children to manipulate them;

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- Never pierce or break laundry capsules/packets;
- Do not leave the capsules/packets outside their container;
- Close the container lid properly after every use.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF EXPOSURE

In case of a child's accidental exposure:

- If the capsule/packet is put in the mouth, rinse the child's mouth and face thoroughly;
- Do not induce vomiting;
- If a child has capsule liquid close to eyes or on hands, rinse carefully with plenty of water
- Call a doctor, or a Poison Control Centre or go to the medical emergency department.

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