



To: All Washington State Emergency Departments
From: William T. Hurley, MD, FACEP
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Subject: Laundry Detergent PODS or Pre-measured Detergent Packs

There is a new type of laundry detergent product on the market which appears as a single use pack or a POD of liquid detergent. These are pre-measured detergent packs that are surrounded by a soluble membrane which dissolves quickly when wet, in the washer or the mouth, releasing the detergent. The PODS are easily accessible in plastic bins and pretty to look at, making them attractive to toddlers. They are stated to contain 2X or 4X the strength of other liquid detergents.

Whereas generally a child ingesting a laundry detergent is not expected to develop significant problems, there are reports of children developing peculiar neurological and respiratory difficulties after ingesting these products.

The only ingredient which seems potentially related is ethoxylated alcohol.

The North Carolina poison center reported 2 toddlers who developed profuse vomiting and CNS depression both requiring intubation. One developed seizure-like activity. Both improved rapidly and were extubated within 24 hours.

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia reported a toddler who developed somnolence, vomiting and aspiration requiring intubation, rapid improvement and extubation within 24 hours.

Ontario Poison Centre in Toronto reported a toddler who developed profuse vomiting, increasing lethargy, wheezing and significant respiratory distress. He was noted to have posterior pharyngeal edema on intubation at the one hour mark and was extubated the next morning, still quite wheezy but CXR clear.

There have also been reports from ophthalmologist confirming corneal abrasion following ocular exposures.

An abstract being presented at a forthcoming toxicology meeting in Europe reports an outbreak of exposures to a similar product with similar, although not as extreme, toxicity. In their study of 578 reported exposures over a 14 month period, 76% developed some symptoms with 70% vomiting, 16% coughing, 1% developed laryngospasm.

Please be aware that these PODS are not typical laundry detergent exposures and may need to be treated with more caution.

If you have questions about this topic or any suspected poisoning case in your area, please contact the Washington Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. We have nurses, pharmacists, poison specialists, & Medical Toxicologists available 24/7.

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