

Watch what you eat: The dangers of a bristle in your burger

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Research published today in the April 2016 edition of *Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery* examines the incidence of injuries caused by ingesting wire bristles from grill brushes, and prompts physicians and consumers to take notice before the summer grilling season.

Researchers reviewed literature and used the Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System and the consumer reported injury database SaferProducts.gov to estimate emergency department visits for wire bristle injuries between 2002 and 2014. The study's authors estimated 1698 cases presented to emergency departments in that time but caution that the estimate doesn't include cases presenting at urgent care facilities or other outpatient settings.

"The issue is likely under reported and thus underappreciated," said the study's lead author, C.W. David Chang, MD. "Because of the uncommon nature of wire bristle injuries, people may not be as mindful about the dangers and implications. Awareness among emergency department physicians, radiologists, and otolaryngologists is particularly important so that appropriate tests and examinations can be conducted."

The most common location of [injury](#) was the oral cavity and the oropharynx which includes the throat and tonsils. In all databases, injuries involving the esophagus and head and neck were more frequent than abdominal injuries.

The study's authors encourage consumers to exercise caution when

cleaning grills with wire-bristle brushes, examining brushes prior to each use and discarding if bristles are loose. They recommend inspecting cooking grates prior to cooking, and checking into alternative cleaning methods.

Provided by American Academy of Otolaryngology

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