

Hospital more than four times as likely for under-6s after laundry pod detergent contact

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Children under the age of 6 are four times as likely to end up in hospital after contact with laundry pod detergent as children exposed to other types of detergent, finds research published online in the journal *Injury Prevention*.

Nearly three out of four cases were diagnosed as poisoning compared with a similar proportion diagnosed as [contact dermatitis](#) for loose liquid or powder detergents, the findings show.

The researchers base their findings on national US data from emergency department visits for [children](#) under the age of 5 between 2012 and 2014.

During this timeframe, nearly 10,000 children sought [emergency care](#) after coming into contact with laundry pod detergent and a further 26,000 did so after exposure to other types of detergent.

The figures revealed that children under 5 accounted for most of the cases (94%) of laundry pod detergent exposure compared with 72% for contact with other types of laundry detergent.

Furthermore, 72% of pod exposures were diagnosed as poisoning compared with a similar proportion diagnosed as contact dermatitis for exposure to loose liquid or powder detergents.

Admission to hospital was more common for exposure to laundry pod

detergent (12.5% of cases) than for liquid or powder detergents (3.0%).

And those exposed to pods were 4 times as likely to be admitted—an indicator of serious injury—than those exposed to other types of detergent.

Greater efforts should be made to protect young children from this hazard, say the researchers. This includes restrictions on the use of laundry pod detergents in homes with children under the [age](#) of 6—as recommended by a consumer product safety group—childproof containers; more muted colours; opaque packaging; and better public awareness of the dangers posed by laundry pod detergent for young children.

Parents and caregivers should store these detergents, along with other chemicals safely out of the reach of children, say the researchers.

"While the innovation of pod laundry detergent makes mundane home tasks easier, their use does require caution and vigilance to safety, especially in homes with young children," they write.

"While regulation of the product appearance is occurring and could make pod products less enticing to adolescents, ultimately it is the responsibility of caregivers to ensure a child-safe environment," they conclude.

More information: Thomas A Swain et al. Laundry pod and non-pod detergent related emergency department visits occurring in children in the USA, *Injury Prevention* (2016). [DOI: 10.1136/injuryprev-2016-041997](https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2016-041997)

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