

Large increase in eye injuries linked to laundry detergent pods among young children

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Between 2012 and 2015, the number of chemical burns to the eye associated with laundry detergent pods increased more than 30-fold among preschool-aged children in the U.S., according to a study published online by *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

The widespread adoption of [laundry detergent](#) pods, which are dissolvable pouches containing enough laundry detergent for a single use, has led to an increase in associated injuries among [children](#). Reports of pod-related injuries, including poisoning, choking, and burns, have suggested that this pattern may be in part due to the products' colorful packaging and candy-like appearance.

R. Sterling Haring, D.O., M.P.H., of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and colleagues examined the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS; run by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission) for the period 2010-2015 for [eye injuries](#) resulting in chemical burn or conjunctivitis among children age 3 to 4 years (i.e., preschool-aged children).

During this time period, 1,201 laundry detergent pod-related ocular burns occurred among children age 3 to 4 years. The number of [chemical burns](#) associated with laundry detergent pods increased from 12 instances in 2012 to 480 in 2015; the proportion of all chemical ocular injuries associated with these devices increased from 0.8 percent

of burns in 2012 to 26 percent in 2015. These injuries most often occurred when children were handling the pods and the contents squirted into one or both of their eyes or when the pod contents leaked onto their hands and a burn resulted from subsequent hand-eye contact.

"These data suggest that the role of laundry detergent pods in eye injuries among preschool-aged children is growing. As with most injuries in this age group, these burns occurred almost exclusively in the home. In addition to proper storage and use of these devices, prevention strategies might include redesigning packaging to reduce the attractiveness of these products to young children and improving their strength and durability," the authors write.

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