

TikTok trend is sending kids home sick across US: What is the 'One Chip Challenge?'

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

A single chip is wreaking havoc in school districts across the country, sending children home sick and sometimes even to a hospital. The "One

Chip Challenge," which has over 850 million views on TikTok, is making a bold return with kids back in class.

The One Chip Challenge, invented by the chip company Paqui, dares people to buy a single "eye-watering, curse-inducing chip made with the hottest peppers on the planet" that comes in a coffin-shaped box, Paqui's website says.

It also warns to keep out of reach of children.

"Those two peppers (in the chip) have been rated as 2 million Scoville units and jalapeño is somewhere around 5,000 so they are around 400 times hotter than a jalapeño," Dr. Bret Christiansen told CBS in early 2022.

School districts are feeling the heat again this semester. Clovis Municipal Schools in New Mexico said about 30 students experienced issues after trying the chip at school in September, KOB reported.

Many were middle schoolers, but some elementary schoolers got their hands on the chip, too, the school told KOB.

"Maybe like five students have reported eating the whole thing but some of them just take an eighth of it and have had full-blown symptoms where they're having to leave school," Krystal Gutierrez, director of Health and Related Services of Clovis Municipal Schools, told KOB.

"That's when we really felt compelled to say, 'Hey parents, we need your help, we don't want these on campus for sure.'"

McClatchy News reached out to Clovis Municipal Schools on Sept. 27 and was awaiting a response.

Treulten Middle and High School in Georgia also reported almost 20

students fell ill due to the chip challenge in September, WMAZ reported.

"I had one in my office a couple days ago, they were really red in the face. ... As they were explaining what was happening it was tough for them to get it out because they were panting, crying," Treulten principal Brandon Tucker told WMAZ.

Paqui advises that those who are pregnant, have medical conditions, or have allergies to peppers, nightshade or capascian should avoid eating the chip.

Challenge-seekers should wash their hands with soap after touching the chip and not touch eyes or sensitive areas, Paqui warns on its website. If a person experiences trouble breathing, fainting or extended nausea, they should seek [medical help](#).

Sometimes children react so severely to the chip that they have to go to the hospital, McClatchy News reported in January 2022. Three [students](#) from Lodi High School in California were sent to the [emergency room](#) after eating the chip, and nine others became sick the same week from trying the challenge.

Lodi High School moved to ban the chip from campus, and other districts, including Huerfano School District in Colorado, followed suit.

"Students across the nation have been hospitalized as a result of a reaction to the heat index of the chips," the school wrote on Facebook on Sept. 14. "We encourage our parents and guardians to speak with their children about the dangers of participating in this and other potentially harmful internet challenges. Notice: Students will be suspended for bringing these to school let alone trying to encourage others to take the challenge."

"The Paqui #OneChipChallenge is notoriously hot, as our branding implies, and the product should be handled with extreme care," the chip company told McClatchy News in a statement in January. "Our #OneChipChallenge includes a safety disclaimer that it should not be ingested by individuals who are sensitive to spicy foods, allergic to peppers, nightshades, or capsaicin, or who are minors, pregnant or have [medical conditions](#)."

School officials and [medical professionals](#) urge parents to monitor their children when it comes to trends and challenges such as the One Chip Challenge, and have a conversation about the consequences.

"Awareness is the best bet—to get that information out there to parents who may not be aware this \$5 thing in the grocery store their kid asked for may be causing harm to their kid or other kids at the school if they share," Gutierrez told KOB4.

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