

Swallowing of super strong magnets in children

‘Super strong’ magnets

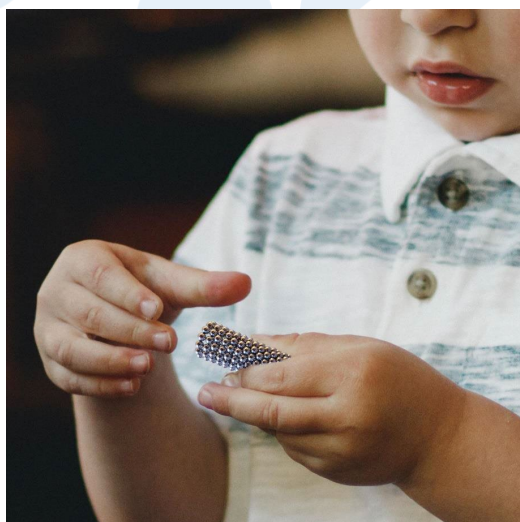
Recently, a different type of magnet (also known as Neo magnet, Bucky balls, Magnet balls or Super Strong Rare-Earth Magnets) has gone on sale. They are most often sold as ‘adult desk toys, stress relievers or brain development toys’ and it is not legal to sell them to anyone less than 14 years of age. If more than one ‘super strong’ magnet is swallowed (ingested) separately, or a ‘super strong’ magnet is swallowed with a metallic object, then they can be strongly attracted together from different parts of the intestines, and potentially cause serious harm by causing direct damage to the intestines.

Who is this advice for?

The advice in this leaflet is for the parents/carers of children who have ingested a ‘super strong’ magnet/magnets and are discharged without the magnet/magnets being removed.

What to look out for

They are between seven and fourteen times stronger than traditional magnets and are sometimes called super strong or powerful magnets. They can be a variety of shapes, most often balls or discs. The images below give some examples of what they look like.



Treatment (including self-care)

Today, your child has been discharged following a medical assessment after swallowing of a magnet. Even though the magnet has not passed through them yet, it is OK to take your child home. After going home, your child will need a follow up X-ray 6-12 hours after their first X-ray, and you should have been given a time to re-attend the Emergency Department. This follow up X-ray is extremely important so doctors can make sure the magnet is moving normally through your child's bowels.

How to prevent any further injury

Until your child has had their repeat (second) X-ray, remove any other external magnetic objects nearby including bellybutton and any other sort of piercing close to their belly, and avoid clothes with metallic buttons or belts with buckles.

There is no need to examine your child's stools/faeces to find the swallowed object.

If a single magnet is ingested, it can be expected to be passed spontaneously if the magnet is not too large.

Very rarely, the object can become stuck in the stomach or intestines. Take your child to the Emergency Department **IMMEDIATELY** if they have:

- Vomiting
- Abdominal (tummy) pain
- Blood in their vomit or poo
- A fever

Or if you have:

- Concerns of further magnet or foreign body ingestion
- Concerns about a change in your child's eating patterns e.g. refusing food or fluids

Other Useful Contacts or Information

NHS 111

