

Protect Children: The Delicates that Matter

Simple steps can stop preventable accidents in the laundry room

Laundry Room Safety

Children are naturally curious. They spend their days exploring the world around them with their eyes, ears, hands, and mouths. For many of them, particularly toddlers, this means putting objects into their mouths, including liquid laundry packets. These products are used by millions of consumers and households each year and contain a highly-concentrated, pre-measured dose of detergent. They are very convenient and easy to use, however, as with any household cleaning product, these should be kept up and out of reach and sight of small children.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) reported 12,594 exposures to single-use laundry packets in 2015 and as of November 30, 2016, there have been 10,673 exposures by children five years and younger this year. Exposure" to refers to the child having contact with a laundry packet, for example, ingesting, inhaling, or absorbing the detergent in the eyes or skin.

The manufacturers of these products have made a number of changes since liquid laundry packets first hit the market including new packaging, new warning labels and adding a bittering substance to the film of each packet. But with proper storage, up and out of reach of small children, accidents can easily be prevented by making sure kids never get their hands on them in the first place.

In the event that you find a child with a packet in their mouth, call the Poison Help Line at 1-800-222-1222.

Poison specialists say there have always been cases of children ingesting household cleaners, but laundry packets are different because children can be more severely injured relatively quickly. Although other detergents may cause mild upset stomach or may not cause any symptoms at all, highly concentrated laundry packets can make children very sick.

Symptoms of ingestion can range in severity and may include:

- Vomiting
- Wheezing
- Drooling
- Severe drowsiness
- Burning of mouth, throat, eyes, and lungs



Take Action

- Never let children handle laundry packets, even with supervision.
- Do not cut, tear or puncture laundry packets. They are designed to dissolve in water.
- If laundry packets stick together throw them away.
- Always handle laundry packet with dry hands. The film that encases the laundry detergent is designed to dissolve quickly, even in small amounts of water.
- Add the liquid laundry packet to the bottom (drum) of the washing machine, for both top loader and high efficiency front-loader machines, before adding clothes to ensure children are not attracted by the packet. This also produces the best results.
- Always ensure the re-closable bag or container holding laundry packets is tightly sealed after each use and during storage.
- Keep laundry packets in their original container with labels intact.
- After use, immediately put laundry products away in an area that is out of reach of children and pets, or in a locked cabinet or storage area.
- Recycle empty laundry product containers when possible.
- If you think a child in your care has been exposed to a laundry packet call the **Poison Control Hotline at 1-800-222-1222** or your physician.



keypledge.com

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For more information, free laundry safety materials and to take the KEY Pledge to make laundry safety a priority, visit the American Cleaning Institute® at www.cleaninginstitute.org. For more information on keeping your family healthy and safe, visit the University of Georgia Extension at www.gafamilies.org.



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