

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
COMPETITION AND CONSUMER ACT 2010

Consumer Protection Notice No. 3 of 2012

SAFETY WARNING NOTICE TO PUBLIC

Pursuant to paragraphs 129(1)(a) and 129(1)(b) of Schedule 2 of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*, I, DAVID BRADBURY, Assistant Treasurer:

- (a) state that the consumer goods specified below are under investigation to determine whether those goods, or a reasonably foreseeable use (including a misuse) of those goods, will or may cause injury to any person; and
- (b) warn of possible risks involved in the use of those goods.

Particulars of goods

Adult novelty products that contain small high-powered rare-earth magnets, with diameters of approximately 4mm to 5mm and marketed for adults to create patterns and build shapes. The products are sold by a range of suppliers and are marketed under various names including 'BuckyBalls', 'Neocubes' and 'Neodymium sphere magnets'.

Investigation

An Australian Competition and Consumer Commission safety investigation is currently underway.

Possible risks

If a child swallows more than one of these high-powered magnets the magnets can attract to each other across the intestinal wall and perforate the intestine, which can be fatal. Emergency surgery is generally required in these circumstances.

Reports indicate that these magnets have been swallowed by young children, while some older children and teenagers have swallowed the magnets after using them as imitation tongue or lip piercings.

Advice to consumers

Parents and carers are advised to ensure that toys or adult novelties containing small high-powered magnets are securely kept away from young children.

Older children are advised not to use magnets as fake tongue or lip piercings. They should not put small high-powered magnets in or near their mouth, nose or anywhere they could be accidentally ingested.

If you suspect a child has swallowed magnets, seek urgent medical assistance to reduce the likelihood and extent of serious injury.

Dated this 28th day of June 2012


DAVID BRADBURY
Assistant Treasurer