

Swallowing of super strong magnets in children

This leaflet offers more information about swallowing of super strong magnets in children. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What are super strong magnets?

Recently, a different type of magnet (also known as a 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 children under the age of 14 years.

These magnets 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.

What is the plan today?

Your child has been assessed as safe to go home after swallowing a magnet. Even though the magnet has not passed through them yet, it is fine to take your child home.

When will we be followed up?

After going home, your child will need a follow up X-ray 6-12 hours later and you should have been given a time to re-attend the Emergency Department. This follow up X-ray is extremely important so the doctor or practitioner can make sure the magnet is moving normally through your child's bowel.

What to do to help?

Remove any other external magnetic objects nearby and avoid clothes with metallic buttons or belts with buckles.

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

Will the magnet pass by itself?

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

When to return to the Emergency department?

Very rarely the magnet can get stuck in the stomach or intestines.

Return your child to the emergency department immediately if they have any of the following:

- Concerns of ingesting an additional magnet or foreign body
- Vomiting
- Abdominal (tummy) pain
- Blood in their vomit or poo
- Fever
- Change in your child's eating patterns e.g. refusing fluids or food.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Emergency Department for Children and Young People on **020 8725 3518**.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer). **Tel:** 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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