



IMPROVING
CHILDREN'S
PRODUCT
SAFETY



**Consumers
Union**
POLICY & ACTION FROM
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Contact:

Consumer Federation of America, Rachel Weintraub, 202-387-6121, rweintraub@consumerfed.org

Kids In Danger, Nancy Cowles, 312-595-0649, nancy@kidsindanger.org

Consumers Union, Kara Kelber, 202-462-6262, kkelber@consumer.org

North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, Camille Bonta, 202-320-3658, cbonta@summithealthconsulting.com

Buckyballs and Buckycubes will be Recalled

Consumer Advocates and Doctors Applaud CPSC's Effort to Protect Children from Hazardous High Powered Magnets

WASHINGTON D.C. – Consumer advocates and pediatric gastroenterologists applaud the Consumer Product Safety Commission's announcement today that a settlement has been reached with Craig Zucker, the former CEO and President of the company that manufactured Buckyballs and Buckycubes, Maxfield and Oberton, which was dissolved in 2012.

High powered magnets, such as Buckyballs or Buckycubes, are bb-shaped smooth balls or cubes that connect to one another with a strong magnetic bond. The magnets are individual balls or cubes that are sold in packages of many individual balls. These products were originally sold as toys to children over 13 years of age, but after a recall in 2010, these products are sold to teens and adults age 14 and older. The new warning label that has appeared on the package of Buckyballs since the recall has not resulted in a decrease in serious injuries to children. In November of 2011, CPSC issued a safety warning to consumers about this product but the injuries continue to occur. In July of 2012, CPSC filed a law suit against the manufacturer of Buckyballs to issue a recall of these products. The [settlement](#) announced today is a resolution of that complaint.

These products are of great interest to children of all ages: younger children mistakenly believe they are candy while older children use these products as faux facial piercings. The consequences of inhaling or swallowing more than one of these powerful magnets are severe. Children who swallow two or more magnets are at risk of developing serious injuries such as small holes in the stomach and intestines, intestinal blockage, blood poisoning, and even death. Removing magnets surgically often requires the repair of the child's damaged stomach and intestines. In the past, physicians have likened the internal damage caused by magnets to that of a bullet wound.

"We applaud the recall of Buckyballs and Buckycubes. High powered magnets have caused serious injuries to children. These incidents should not happen and can be prevented," stated Rachel Weintraub, legislative director and senior counsel with Consumer Federation of America. "It is critical to get these products off of the

market, out of people's homes and away from children who could be harmed by ingesting two or more of these balls or cubes."

Consumers will have six months to participate in the recall by requesting a refund. The recall trust will be funded by Craig Zucker and will be overseen by the CPSC.

"We are pleased with the recall announcement," said Athos Bousvaros, MD, president of the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN). "Many of our member physicians have spent hours removing these high-powered magnets from innocent infants and children to reduce the risk of abdominal surgery. Magnets that remain in the environment pose a major risk to children and adolescents."

"Since Kenny Sweet died in 2005 from swallowing magnets from a toy, the dangers of tiny magnets have been well-documented. Our 2012 study, *Analysis of CPSC-Supplied Data on Magnet Related Injuries*, showed that whether the product is part of a toy or a desk accessory, the outcome is the same --children ingest these magnets and suffer extreme internal damage," stated Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger. "We welcome this settlement."

Ami Gadhia, senior policy counsel for Consumers Union, the policy and advocacy division of Consumer Reports, said, "Simply put -- today's settlement and recall of Buckyballs means that the CPSC is helping to keep dangerous high powered magnets out of the hands of children. We have seen too many cases where children swallow these tiny yet powerful magnets masquerading as adult products and suffer serious medical consequences. This is the right move for parents and children alike. We applaud the CPSC for its efforts to recall these high-powered magnet products and its work to keep them off the shelves for good, preventing further injuries to children."

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The Consumer Federation of America is a nonprofit association of nearly 300 consumer groups that, since 1968, has sought to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education. www.consumerfed.org

Kids In Danger (KID) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety. KID was founded in 1998 by the parents of sixteen-month-old Danny Keysar who died in his Chicago childcare home when a portable crib collapsed around his neck. www.KidsInDanger.org

Incorporated in 1972, the North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (NASPGHAN), with more than 1700 members, is the leading society in the field of pediatric digestive diseases. www.naspghan.org

Consumers Union is the public policy and advocacy division of Consumer Reports. Consumers Union works for a fair, just, and safe marketplace for all consumers, and to empower consumers to protect themselves, in the areas of telecommunications reform, health reform, food and product safety, financial reform, and other consumer issues. Consumer Reports is the world's largest independent product-testing organization. Using its more than 50 labs, auto test center, and survey research center, the nonprofit rates thousands of products and services annually. Founded in 1936, Consumer Reports has over 8 million subscribers to its magazine, website, and other publications. www.consumersunion.org