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50 Years Ago in *The Journal of Pediatrics*

From Aspirin to Magnets: 50 Years of Pediatric Ingestions

Deeths T, Breeden J. Poisoning in Children—A Statistical Study of 1057 Cases. J Pediatr 1971;78:299-305.

Deeths and Breeden collected data on pediatric ingestion admissions at Milwaukee Children's Hospital from 1962 to 1968 and took special note of the number of patients treated for aspirin and hydrocarbon ingestions. Their findings were part of a broader problem throughout the US, with an estimated 2 million poisonings and 400 deaths per year in patients under 5 years of age. Although there were variations from year to year in the particular ingestions, there were no discernable improvements in ingestions of aspirin or hydrocarbons.

It is within this epidemic of ingestions that national legislation began to take effect and protect children. Just before the study period, in 1957, poison control centers were first mandated to collect and report data to the US Food and Drug Administration, and in 1961, *The Child Protection Act* first banned dangerous and hazardous toys. In 1966, aspirin packaging requirements were changed to decrease toxic pediatric ingestions. Finally, the Consumer Product Safety Commission was created with the *Poison Prevention Packaging Act* in 1970. Together, these legislative actions changed the market for medications and toys which could be ingested by young children. Since then, the number of fatalities due to poisoning for children less than 5 years of age has decreased from 216 deaths in 1972 to 30 deaths in 2016.[1]

Despite the success of this legislation, there are still challenges today. In 2018, there were nearly 1 million calls to Poison Control Centers for exposures to children 5 years old and younger, representing more than 40% of reported exposures.[2] New products often represent the greatest threats, and recent trends in exposures include laundry detergent pods and rare earth magnets. These products fall within broad categories, household chemicals and toys, that continue to represent common ingestions for children since the 1950s. As clinicians and advocates, pediatricians must remain diligent and coordinate with Poison Control Centers to quickly note trends in exposures and notify the public, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and legislators when products pose dangers to young children.

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