



## Water beads warning

### What are water beads?

Water beads are a kids' toy made up of tiny plastic balls that expand in water. They create a squishy, sensory experience. Water beads are small and brightly colored. They look a lot like candy, boba balls or gum.

### Why are they dangerous?

Small children can put these colored balls in their ears, nose or mouth. Swallowing even one is very dangerous. It can cause choking or a bowel obstruction. Just one water bead can expand enough in a few hours to block the intestine or airway of a small child. If the water bead does not pass through the digestive system, surgery is needed to remove it. Water beads do not always show up on an X-ray, so it is hard for doctors to find them in the body.

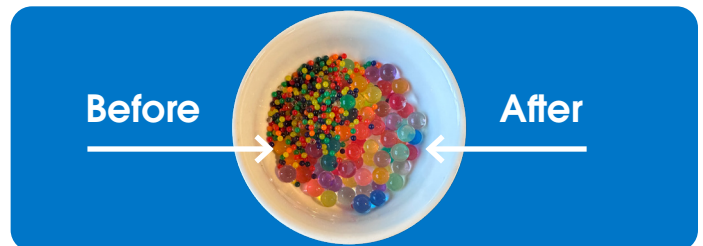
### What are some warning signs?

Since these accidents can happen so quickly, parents and caregivers might not be aware that something is wrong. Signs and symptoms your child has swallowed water beads include:

- Coughing/gagging/drooling
- Trouble swallowing/not eating
- Breathing faster, harder, or making a whistle noise when breathing
- Pain, discomfort and/or anxiousness
- Vomiting stomach contents or blood
- Throat, chest or abdominal pain
- Not eating

### What should I do if I think my child has swallowed water beads?

Get medical help right away. Do not let your child eat or drink anything until they see a doctor, and do not make your child vomit. Call 911 immediately if your child can't breathe or is vomiting blood.



### How do I keep kids safe around water beads?

The best and safest advice is to immediately remove water beads from any environment with small children. Even when careful, water beads are so small and hard to see that they can get stuck in carpet or roll away only to be found later.

- Always check the recommended age range on toys. Generally, water beads are recommended for kids 5 years and older.
- Allow older kids to play with water beads only under adult supervision (per manufacturer instructions). Store them out of reach after use.
- Teach your kids never to swallow any items that are not food.

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