



UNITED STATES  
**CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION**  
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**CHAIR ALEXANDER D. HOEHN-SARIC**

**Statement of Chair Alexander D. Hoehn-Saric:  
Congressman Frank Pallone Press Conference on Water Beads**

**November 13, 2023**

Thank you, Congressman Pallone for inviting me to join this important event. And thanks to the parents and the advocates who have been working so hard to bring attention to the risks of water beads.

I want to acknowledge Ashley Haugen in particular. I first spoke with Ashley last December when she told me about her daughter and the impact that water beads had on her health.

Over the past year, I have been consistently impressed with her advocacy and that of other parents whose children have also experienced horrific injuries from water beads.

Water beads look harmless and are marketed to families to be used as crafts, as sensory toys for children with autism, or as ammunition in a toy gun.

But the tiny beads can easily roll away or get lost, only to be picked up by a curious baby or toddler. Once swallowed, the beads expand and can pose choking and intestinal obstruction hazards inside a child's body, resulting in severe discomfort, vomiting, dehydration, and a risk of death.

They are also extremely difficult for doctors to identify and can be dismissed as illness while a baby gets sicker and sicker.

This fall, CPSC updated our safety advice on water beads to parents, child-care centers, and schools. Our message is clear: If babies or small children might be present, then water beads should NOT be available.

In September, we also issued a recall of one water bead kit. And we are actively investigating others, including taking a close look at potentially harmful levels of certain chemicals in water beads.

But so long as these are sold to families as toys and crafts, the hazard exists.

Last week I led the Commission in directing our staff to officially begin the process of revising the mandatory regulation on water beads. Unfortunately, this process can be time-consuming and could well be challenged in court.

That is why the bill Congressman Pallone is introducing is so important. A legislative mandate is the fastest way to address the hazard water beads present and to protect babies and small children across the nation.

I look forward to working with all of you to continue to combat this hazard.

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