

Magnet safety

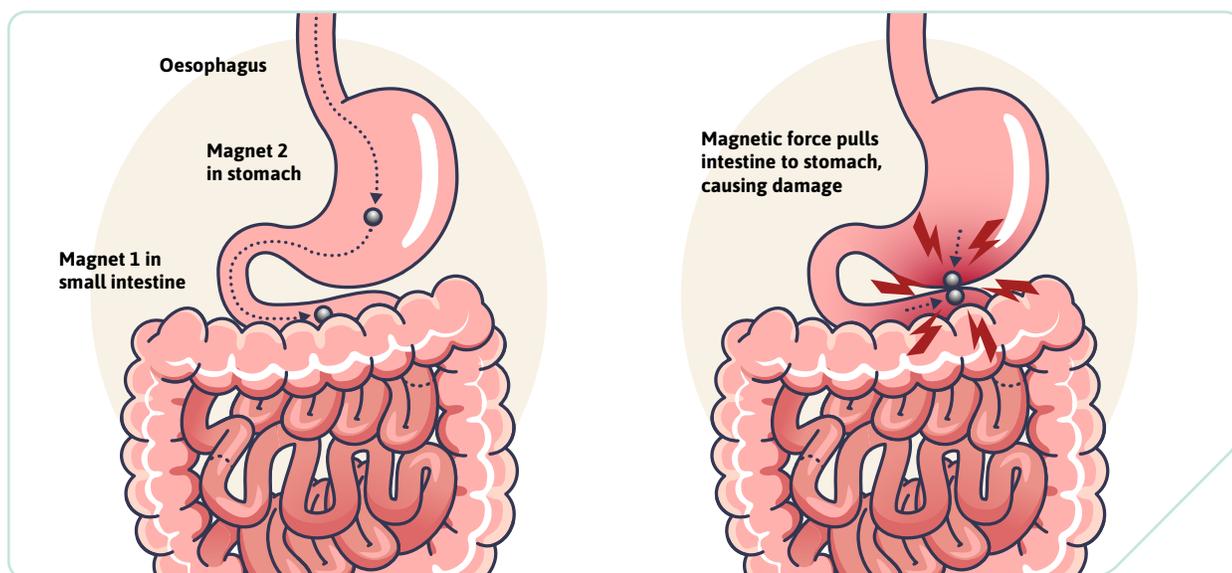
Small, powerful magnets can be dangerous if swallowed. Know the risks.



Health risks

Swallowing small, powerful magnets can lead to severe injuries, causing lifelong health problems, or even death. **Children under 10 years of age are most at risk.** It is especially dangerous if more than one magnet is swallowed over a short period of time. The magnets can attract one another while travelling through the intestines. When this happens, the magnets can slowly tear through the intestinal walls. It is also possible for the magnets to twist the intestines and create a blockage.

The picture below contains two images showing the stomach, small intestine, and swallowed magnets. The image on the left shows a magnet in the stomach and one in the small intestine. The image on the right shows the two magnets attracted to each other, with magnetic force pulling the intestine toward the stomach, causing damage to the gastric wall.





Products with small, powerful magnets

Small, powerful magnets can be found in jewellery, clothing accessories, fridge magnets, household items and a variety of toy products including:

- puzzles
- train sets
- board games
- action figures and dolls
- construction or building sets
- alphabet and number magnets
- toy jewellery and dress-up items

Canada's *Toys Regulations* limit the strength and size of magnets that can be used in toys, but you might still find some for sale especially when shopping online or buying second hand. If you are buying a toy with magnets, make sure the magnetic pieces are too big to swallow and buy from trusted sources.

Small, powerful magnets can also be found in novelty magnet sets that are marketed as entertainment products for adults. It is illegal to sell these sets in Canada if the powerful magnets are small enough to be swallowed by a child. Examples of types of products that may contain these dangerous, small, powerful magnets include:

- puzzles
- desk toys
- sculpture kits
- relaxation toys

Symptoms of swallowing small, powerful magnets

After a person swallows small, powerful magnets, there may be no signs of physical distress or discomfort for many days. Because symptoms of swallowed magnets are often like the symptoms of other stomach problems, they can be difficult to identify until severe injuries have developed.

Common symptoms include:

- vomiting
- diarrhea
- stomach pain

If you think someone has swallowed a magnet, even if they don't seem very sick or show any symptoms, get medical attention immediately.

Important

Small, powerful magnets can be dangerous for everyone, not only children. People can accidentally swallow these magnets when they:

- attach them to braces
- separate them with their teeth
- use them as fake tongue or cheek piercings

Magnet safety tips

Follow these safety tips to help prevent serious injury.

- Keep products with loose, small, powerful magnets out of the reach of children of all ages.
- Check your children's toys. Throw away any toys with small, powerful magnets if the:
 - magnets are loose
 - magnetic toy pieces are small enough to be swallowed
- Teach children about the dangers of small, powerful magnets. Always supervise children around products with magnets.
- Magnets should never be placed in the mouth or in other body parts.
- Seek immediate medical attention if someone swallows, or is suspected of swallowing, one or more magnets.
- Read and follow the age recommendations, warnings, safety messages and assembly instructions for all items with magnets.
- Report any injuries or safety concerns at Canada.ca/report-a-product

Product recalls

Check product recalls at Canada.ca/recalls for toys or other products that have been recalled because of incidents with magnets, or because they do not comply with Canada's safety requirements. Use the search term "magnets" to help narrow the results. When searching for older records, be sure to use the "Include archived" checkbox.

Learn more: Canada.ca/product-safety