



CCNC Contact:

Jessica Redden, RN

Scott County Health Department

P. 563-326-8618 Ext. 8821

E. [jessica.redden](mailto:jessica.redden@scottcountyiowa.gov)

@scottcountyiowa.gov

Did you know that your Child Care Nurse Consultant can offer a Health and Safety Checklist visit or a Child Health Record Check up?

These health and safety tools are free of charge and help to provide you information on ways to make improvements in health and safety in your child care setting. For more information please contact your local CCNC listed above.

Call your Child Care Nurse Consultant (CCNC) if you have any questions about child health and safety, or any special training needs.

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The Potential Dangers of Water Beads for Young Children

Sensory play is a great way to help children explore the world. Sensory play uses different textures and materials that allow children to be creative, grow their social skills and problem solve. One sensory item you may be familiar with is water beads, also known as water-absorbing gel beads, or superabsorbent polymer (SAP) beads.

Water beads come in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes. Young children may confuse colorful beads for candy which causes safety concerns. If a water bead is swallowed by a child, the bead or beads could lead to choking or cause a bowel blockage as they can continue to expand after being swallowed. Water beads can also be dangerous if they get stuck in an ear, nose, etc.

Tammy Noble, RN, CSPI, from the Iowa Poison Control Center states her agency receives "on average between 5 to 15 calls a month on water bead exposures. The majority involve children swallowing water beads. It is highly recommended to call poison control if you suspect someone has swallowed a water bead. The treatment recommendations from poison control will depend on many factors such as the size of the water bead, how many swallowed or if placed in the nose or ear. Iowa Poison Control Center is available 24/7 to assist the parent or caregiver."

If you suspect or see a child swallow or place water bead(s) into their ear or nose:

- Immediately call the Poison Helpline at 1-800-222-1222. Services are free, confidential, and available 24/7.
- Call the child's parent or guardian and let them know what happened, that you have contacted the Poison Helpline, and what guidance was given.
- Suggest the parent seek guidance from their doctor.
- **If a child is choking, has trouble breathing, or other life threatening concerns call 911!**

When using sensory items, they should be:

- Labeled as nontoxic
- In line with size and material guidance to avoid choking
- Developmentally appropriate for age
- Supervised

For guidance on other types of sensory play, contact your local CCNC and visit Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs Standard 6.2.4.3 <https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/6.2.4.3>

The logo for America's Poison Centers has changed. A picture of the new logo is on this newsletter. The poison control phone number needs to be visible and posted. To order stickers or magnets with the poison control number and other helpful information visit: <https://www.iowapoison.org/order-material/bulk-order-material> or contact your local CCNC.

