

2 March 2010

UK Cleaning Products Industry Association - response to BMJ article 'Wave of paediatric eye injuries from liquid detergent capsules'

The industry takes concerns about its products very seriously and we will be reviewing the full research paper when it is available.

Liquid detergent sachets have been on the market for nearly 10 years and **used as directed are perfectly safe.**

An estimated **6 billion** have been used over this time and currently 850 million are used per year in the UK.

It is very important to **store all household products out of reach of children.**

Liquid detergent sachets clearly state on the label to

-Keep out of reach of children

- Avoid contact with eyes
- In the event of contact with eyes immediately rinse with plenty of water

Typically the industry also adds the same messages in a visual depiction

(see the attached examples)

Additionally, when it was reported that some children were accidentally exposed to laundry products when helping their parents with the weekly wash, the industry agreed not to show young children helping their mum loading the wash, in their adverts.

The summary report is incorrect to state that the products are alkaline (which has the potential to be corrosive to eyes) in fact they have **a pH of 8 i.e. essentially neutral** and causes no irreversible effect. All liquid detergent sachets have to undergo stringent safety evaluation – including eye irritancy – before they can be made available to consumers.

The report cites **13 eye injuries, of which 12 were 'resolved with no complications'**. (The 13th child failed to have irrigation until he/she arrived at the hospital, even in this case there should be a complete recovery). The average age of the children who reported eye contact was under 2 years.

This is consistent with our assessment that any such eye incidents are fully recoverable.

We welcome the report as it highlights in particular **the role that parents have to play in following guidance for the safe use of our products, including storing products safely at all times.**

Can be attributable to Philip Malpass, Director General, UKCPI
Tel 01829 770055 Mob 07710 000962