

## FDA issues new meat preparation guidelines

In response to the recent outbreak of food-borne illnesses and deaths resulting from eating undercooked hamburgers, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has changed its recommendations for cooking ground beef.

FDA officials now recommend that all parts of ground beef products should reach at least 155 degrees Fahrenheit when cooked. At this temperature, ground beef will not be pink at the center, and juices will be clear.

These recommendations are part of the FDA's retail food protection program, which provides advice on the proper handling, cooking, holding and storage of food.

Physicians should be alert to symptoms of food-borne illnesses in order to diagnose, treat and report them quickly and appropriately. Usual symptoms include diarrhea (often bloody) and abdominal cramps.

## Window blinds hazards

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the American Window Covering Manufacturers Association (AWCMA) warns parents about the danger of accidental strangulation if young children become entangled in pull cords for window coverings.

The commission is aware of at least 118 deaths between 1981 and 1991.

According to CPSC officials, window covering cords are one of the products most frequently associated with strangulations of children younger than five years.

The CPSC and the AWCMA urge parents to keep cords out of the reach of young children by tying or hanging the cord at or near the top of window coverings.

Crib and baby furniture should not be placed near windows because the furniture allows children additional height to reach the cords.

To secure the cords, the AWCMA suggests the following:

- Clip the cord to itself or to the window covering with a clamping

device such as a clothes pin or cord clip.

- Wrap or tie the cord to itself.
- Wrap the cord around a cleat securely mounted near the top of the window covering.

- Install a tie-down device.

Devices are available from hardware stores or from window covering dealers.

## Newco swing sets

Newco Inc., of Janesville, Wis., will pay a civil penalty of \$115,000 to resolve allegations that the firm failed to report a defect in certain Swing-N-Slide swing seats as required under the Consumer Product Safety Act (CPSA).

CPSC officials said that Newco Inc. officials knew that some of the company's Swing-N-Slide swing seats

were defective. The V-shaped bracket that connects the swing seat to the swing chain was difficult to close. Failure to completely close the hook ends of the brackets caused serious laceration injuries to children. CPSC also alleges that the firm failed to report the product defect as required by the CPSA.

A voluntary bracket replacement program was announced jointly by CPSC and Newco on April 1992.

Newco swing set owners are reminded to check all belted seats for bracket hooks that are not completely closed, and crimp or hammer the hooks closed until the metal touches. If the brackets cannot be completely closed, Newco is offering consumers free replacement brackets, that are designed to prevent hook-end lacerations. Consumers can obtain the redesigned brackets free of charge by calling Swing-N-Slide Customer Service at (800) 888-1232.

## Suarez toy helicopters

Puerto Rico-based Suarez Toy House is recalling 144 "My First Push Toy Funny Copter," item number 6412OH, because colored beads inside the helicopter and pieces of the helicopter separated during routine CPSC testing, presenting potential aspiration and choking hazards.

The helicopter is a push toy with a bright yellow body, blue, green or red wheels, and a yellow or red propeller. The toy has three colored, spinning disks in front and a multi-colored, spinning and rattling drum in the back. The helicopter has a clear plastic dome. Inside the dome colored beads and three colored animal figures spin around as the toy is pushed.

The Funny Copters were sold throughout Puerto Rico at various retail stores from Dec. 8, 1992 through Dec. 21, 1992. They sold cost \$5.44 to \$8.60 each.

Consumers should return the toys to the stores where they were purchased for a free replacement toy of equal value. For more information contact Lucy Pabon at (809) 760-7070.

No injuries have been reported involving the Funny Copters.

## 'Bamm-Bamm's Drum/Flute'

San Pacific International, Inc., of San Francisco, is recalling 24,576 "Bamm-Bamm's Drum/Flute" toys that were sold from May 1988 through October 1991.

The company announced the recall after a bell attached to the top of the drum and a ball attached to the side of the drum came off during CPSC testing. The small pieces present a choking hazard.

No injuries have been reported.

The product has a whistle at one end and a see-through, hand-held drum at

the other end. The whistle end resembles a flute.

Each side of the drum has a see-through sticker that shows "Bamm-Bamm," the animated character of a little boy as seen on the "Flintstones" cartoon show. Bamm-Bamm is wearing a leopard loincloth and cap and is carrying a green club.

The label embossed on the see-through sticker of the club reads: "Bamm-Bamm's Drum & Flute, 1988 HB. PROD. INC., KINGS DOMINION."

Consumers are urged to take the toys away from young children and mail one side of the plastic drums to: Laura Miranda, San Pacific International, Inc., 542 Brannan Street, San Francisco, CA. 94107. Consumers will receive a full refund, including reimbursement for postage. For information, contact: Laura Miranda at (800) 223-4438.

## Wham-O water slides

Kransco Group Companies and the CPSC warn consumers that WHAM-O backyard water slides, manufactured by Kransco and WHAM-O for years, should *not* be used by adults or teenagers.

The toys were designed for use by children only. Use by adults and teenagers has the potential to result in neck injury and paralysis.

Kransco reports that seven adults who used the slides suffered neck injuries, quadriplegia or paraplegia. A 13-year-old suffered a fractured neck while using a WHAM-O slide. The incidents occurred between 1973 and 1991.

Nine million WHAM-O water slides called "Slip 'N Slide," "Super Slip 'N Slide," "Slip 'N Splash," "White Water Rapids," "Fast Track Racers," and "Wet Banana" were sold nationwide from 1961 to February 1992.

The slides are long plastic sheets with stakes to secure them to a flat lawn free of rocks, mounds and depressions. Some slides included an inflatable raft to slide on to the plastic sheet; others may have an inflatable pool at the end of the slide.

Consumers should read the warnings and instructions on the box and the toy which state the product is *not* intended for adult use. Adults should instruct children how to use the slides safely.

Consumers with questions about this warning should call Kransco at (800) 334-5775.

## Dangerous playground slides

Hedstrom Corporation, Blazon-Flexible Flyer Inc., and representatives of Turco, are reissuing a notice to provide consumers with guards for the handrail attachment area on certain home playground slides. These guards prevent the entanglement of strings from children's clothing which could result in strangulation.

The companies are renewing the offer because of low consumer re-

sponse to the initial notice. Only 5,000 consumers have called for a retrofit kit. Approximately 1.5 million sets were sold between 1973 and 1991.

Plastic guards from the companies will fill in the handrail-to-slide area where a child's clothing may catch and possibly result in strangulation. The slides involved are on the "Hedstrom Big T" swing sets and the Blazon-Flexible Flyer "T-Type Play Centers," and on Sears brand T-style gym sets manufactured by all three firms.

The Hedstrom Corporation received a report that a 3-year-old girl was strangled when her mitten strings caught at the point where the handrail attaches to the Big-T slide.

Hedstrom Big-T and Blazon Flexible Flyer T-Type Play Center swing sets with slides were sold nationally in retail stores from 1986 through 1991. They cost approximately \$100 to \$200 each. Turco sets were sold from 1973 to 1987. The sets were also sold under the Sears labels with various model numbers.

Consumer are urged to contact Hedstrom Corporation at (800) 453-7000 or (800) 233-3271; Blazon-Flexible Flyer, Inc. at (800) 521-6233 or Turco representatives at (800) 228-8237 immediately to receive the plastic guards. The guards attach easily to the handrail-to-slide area of the T-style swing sets.

## Playskool Teddy bears

Approximately 170,390 Playskool Teddy Bears, number 5149, have been recalled because Playskool Inc., received 18 complaints that the eyes separated from the "Playskool Teddy Bear."

The bear was sold from October 1990 through the end of 1992. The bears were sold nationally for about \$15.

The soft plush teddy bear is light brown with dark brown eyes and a black nose. The bear is approximately 13 inches long and has two sewn-in labels: a red label with the Playskool name and a white label with the item number and washing instructions.

Consumers should return the teddy bears to: Playskool Inc., P.O. Box 1990, Pawtucket, RI 02862-9940 for a full refund of the purchase price plus postage. For information consumers may write to: Playskool Teddy Bear Recall Program, 200 Narragansett Park Drive, P.O. Box 200, Pawtucket, RI 02860-0200 or call (800) 752-9755.

## 'Cordless Phone Organs'

Coyne's Inc., of Minneapolis, Minn., is recalling 7,000 musical cordless toy telephones called "Cordless Phone Organ," sold between June 1991 and January 1993.

Consumers may return the toys to the stores where they were purchased for a full refund. For more information about the recall, contact Coyne's Inc., at (800) 336-8666 or write to the company at 7400 Boone Ave. North Minneapolis, Minn. 55428.