

Safety Fact Sheet

Bean Bags



What are bean bags?

Bean bags are cushions or similar items filled with small polystyrene beads or other lightweight beads.

How may children be injured when using bean bags?

Choking / Suffocation

- Children, particularly those aged less than three years, may swallow or inhale the polystyrene beads contained in bean bags.
- Children may crawl inside a bean bag cover and be suffocated by the bag and its contents.

How common are these injuries?

Bean bag fillings have been associated with a number of chokings, however, there are no recent published statistics available. Since the introduction of the safety standard outlined below, there has been a reduction in the number of injuries.¹

Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for bean bags?

The law in Australia states that all bean bags sold must have a warning label containing the following:

"WARNING. Small Lightweight Beads Present A Severe Danger To Children If Swallowed or Inhaled"

Bean bags and bean bag covers must also have a child resistant slide-fastener on any opening through which bean bag filling can be inserted or removed.

Remember:

- To avoid the risk of injury, do not buy products filled with small polystyrene beads or other lightweight beads for your child to play with or to use.
- If purchasing such products, ensure that they have both the mandatory warning label and child-resistant slide fasteners on any opening through which bean bag filling can be inserted or removed.
- To reduce the danger of bean bags and other products filled with lightweight beads, sew the zippers shut or remove the handle on the zipper. If you remove the handle on the zipper, simply attach a paper clip to it when you need to open it.
- Do not place your baby on a bean bag, as the bag may cover your baby's face.²
- Always supervise your child with any products that are filled with small polystyrene beads or other lightweight beads.

¹ Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (1999) ACCC Jumps on Dangerous Bean Bags. Release # MR 224/99 Issued: 15th November 1999

² <http://www.sidsandkids.org>