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SAFETY ALERT

No. 09-02

WATER GEL CRYSTALS

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There have been recent incidents involving students bringing water gel crystals, such as “Seven Color Crystal Ball” depicted in the photos below, to school. The plastic beads, purchased from discount and garden supply stores, expand over 400% when placed in water. They are made from a water-absorbing polymer designed to be used as a gardening aid. They are **NOT** intended to be consumed.



Reportedly, students have been placing the crystals into their mouths and allowing them to expand to approximately the size of a marble. In addition to the obvious choking hazard, consumption of the crystals may also present health concerns since their makeup is unknown. Gastrointestinal obstruction is also a possibility if they are ingested before the expansion occurs.

Administrators should confiscate any such products found at school. Students who have consumed water gel crystals and who experience any health-related symptoms, such as abdominal pain, distension or vomiting, should see the School Nurse or otherwise seek medical attention. All incidents should be reported to Nursing Services at 213-765-2800 or OEHS at 213-241-3199.

If you have questions, contact the Office of Environmental Health & Safety at 213-241-3199.

DISTRIBUTION: All Schools and Local District Offices