

What if a Child Swallows a Rubber Chip?

In 1994 the Maryland Environmental Services (MES) put this question to a series of tests. At the MES request, a testing laboratory subjected 3/4 inch pieces of tire chips to hydrochloric acid (stomach acid). "Visual examination of insoluble residue appeared to indicate only fibrous reinforcing strands were dissolved by the hydrochloric acid. The tire rubber did not appear to be affected in any way; i.e. chalking, cracking, spauling, fracturing, etc." (PSI report No. 486-40013-001). What does this mean? If a piece of rubber is swallowed, it should not cause any acute or chronic problems. Short-term issues, such as an upset stomach will be a function of the amount of rubber swallowed. As to the fate of the rubber chips swallowed, they are eventually evacuated from the body, just like any other non-digestible material.

Additional Information

Any of the above referenced documents may be obtained from the Scrap Tire Management Council at no charge. For further information on playground safety, contact the Consumers Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207; <http://www.cpsc.gov>. We suggest obtaining their publication on Playground Surfacing Materials, CPSC Document #1005.

About the Scrap Tire Management Council:

The STMC is not-for-profit, advocacy organization, founded and supported by the United States based tire manufacturers. The Council is part of the Rubber Manufacturers Association, the trade association representing the United States rubber industry. The Council's primary function is to assist in the promotion and development of environmental sound and cost efficient markets for the scrap tires generated in the United States.

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