

Consumer Alert!

A Potential Choking Hazard

(NAPSA)—Is an innocent-looking kid's chocolate candy a possible choking hazard? That's the alarming question put by consumer advocates to the manufacturer of a chocolate-covered plastic egg sold in retail outlets such as 7-Eleven stores. Megga Surprise is the brainchild of a small Florida manufacturing company, Whetstone Candy Company, which vigorously denies the charge.

The product itself looks like a traditional foil-encased chocolate egg, the kind that's particularly popular at Easter. When you peel off the foil, you find a plastic egg covered in a layer of chocolate. The plastic egg pulls apart, revealing a selection of paper toys and stickers. You have the choice of eating the chocolate layer or just ignoring it to get to the goodies inside. Even when the chocolate is eaten, the container retains its chocolate smell, attracting children to this potential choking hazard, say its critics.

At best, Megga Surprise is a trite idea: fool the consumer into thinking you've bought an ordinary chocolate egg and get a big plastic surprise. But the National Consumers League and the Consumer Federation of America have bigger concerns. So concerned, in fact, that they've written to the Consumer Product Safety Commission urging its recall.

Their primary concern is about



the potential choking hazard presented by the product. However, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Megga Surprise has passed federal tests designed to assess its choking potential. But the Commission did voice another concern about the product, describing the combination of plastic and chocolate in a children's product as a "bad idea."

While it's difficult to measure the effect of this controversy on sales of Megga Surprise, there's no doubt that the product is failing at the candy counter. Retailers consider Megga Surprise to be a "slow seller," said a spokeswoman for the 7-Eleven chain, confirming that they won't be reordering.

Thanks to savvy consumers, Megga Surprise does look set to disappear from the candy shelves.