



# Warren Consolidated Schools

*Creating Dynamic Futures through Student Achievement, High Expectations, and Strong Relationships*

## ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

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January 17, 2018

Dear WCS Community:

I felt compelled to share with you that the latest “internet” fad for children is the “Tide Pod Challenge,” a very dangerous game that has created a lot of media attention over the past several days. The “challenge” is for students to record themselves eating a laundry detergent pod and then upload the video to social media.

Sadly, many youths do not realize the potentially deadly consequences of this challenge. Laundry detergent pods contain dangerous chemicals that, if ingested, can lead to life threatening breathing problems, damage to the esophagus, burns, blood pressure changes, gastrointestinal problems, and neurological damage.

With this letter is a recent article from ABC News, providing information about the “Tide Pod Challenge.”

I encourage you to speak with your children about the seriousness of this challenge and the peer pressure that may be associated with it. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Brent Bott, Director of Security and Crisis Management, at 586-698-4110.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Livernois, Ph.D.  
Superintendent



## **Why internet craze the 'Tide pod challenge' is dangerous, potentially deadly**

By SARANG KOUSHIK M.D.

Jan 16, 2018, 2:12 PM ET – FROM ABC NEWS

Spring cleaning may be several months away, but laundry detergent is making big headlines this week as a dangerous stunt called the “Tide Pod Challenge” is going viral on YouTube and other social media platforms. The challenge is for participants, primarily teens and young adults, in the videos making the rounds to put the pods into their mouths, sometimes even chew them, and then post videos of what happens. Some of these individuals experience foaming at the mouth and severe coughing spells after consuming a pod. It’s more than just a strange behavior, it’s potentially deadly. Here are some facts about the craze to help friends and family protect teens from the hazardous experiment.

### **What are Tide pods?**

Tide pods, the brand's version of the popular laundry detergent pods, are small packets of detergent designed to dissolve while washing clothes. Each pod contains pre-measured, concentrated detergent levels. The outside wrapping of a tide pod is made of polyvinylalcohol (PVA), a water soluble plastic compound. For the same reason that this packet dissolves in the machine washing laundry, it can also dissolve in a person's mouth leading to the immediate release and absorption of the contents.

### **Why are detergent pods dangerous?**

Tide pods are not meant for human consumption and for good reason. They contain dangerous chemicals that, if ingested, can lead to life threatening breathing problems, damage to the esophagus from the corrosive ingredients, burns, blood pressure changes, gastrointestinal problems and neurological symptoms, including loss of consciousness.

### **What ingredients in laundry detergent are dangerous?**

Laundry detergent pods contain numerous chemicals that are potentially harmful if they are swallowed or otherwise ingested. Chief among these concerns is a chemical known as 1,4 Dioxane. According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, exposure to this compound can cause eye and nose irritation, kidney problems and possible long-term lung damage. These effects are unlikely to occur if the product is used appropriately. A spokesperson for Tide told ABC News in a statement that the company is concerned about the trend and emphasized that the pods should only be used for laundry. "Laundry packs are made to clean clothes," the statement said. "They should not be played with, whatever the circumstance, even if meant as a joke."

### **How many people have died because of this stunt?**

The exact number of deaths related to the Tide pod challenge is difficult to estimate. But a growing number of injuries have been linked to ingestion of these products, for any reason, as they have grown in popularity. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, there were 10,570 cases of detergent exposure reported to poison centers in 2017, for children 5 and younger. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reported eight deaths related to laundry detergent pod ingestion since these products hit the market in 2012, through mid-2017. Anyone who suspects someone they know has ingested chemicals from a detergent pod should call the poison control center hotline at 1-800-222-1222 and take the exposed person to the emergency room immediately.