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## AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Teens land in ER after taking 'Cinnamon Challenge'

Posting digital videos on Internet sites such as YouTube can make just about anyone an overnight sensation. One video challenge, however, can put youths at risk.

The "Cinnamon Challenge" dares teens to swallow a table-spoonful of dry cinnamon within an hour while being recorded on video. Thousands of people have posted their mostly failed attempts online.

Although the task seems simple enough, some youths have ended up in the emergency room after taking the challenge. Most people cannot swallow cinnamon because it dries out the mouth.

The person often begins coughing and has burning in the mouth, nose and throat. The individual then chokes, throws up or inhales the spice into the lungs. A lung infection like pneumonia can develop later because cinnamon does not dissolve or break down.

In 2012, poison centers received 222 calls about cinnamon use or misuse. Many needed medical attention.

Many who are tempted to take the challenge are around 13-14 years old, according to an article in the American Academy of Pediatrics' journal, *Pediatrics*. The article noted that some teens have been hospitalized, and some needed ventilator support when their lungs collapsed.

At greatest risk are teens with asthma, allergies or other respiratory conditions. They are more likely to have shortness of breath and trouble breathing if they try the Cinnamon Challenge.

If someone who does stop breathing, collapses or has a seizure, dial 911 right away.

Parents should discourage children from trying to swallow large amounts of dry spices like cinnamon. The consequences are not worth a brief moment in the spotlight.

— Trisha Koriath



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