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PRESS RELEASE

Consumer Council Warns Parents About Dangers of Popular "Squishy" Toys

The Consumer Council of Fiji is urging parents, caregivers, and the general public to exercise heightened caution when purchasing “squishy toys”, particularly cheap, unbranded, or counterfeit products. The advisory comes following a series of international safety alerts and product recalls highlighting severe risks including chemical burns, toxic chemical exposure, and choking hazards.

Squishy toys, the soft, gel-filled sensory toys often shaped like animals, food items, or dumplings have become highly popular among children in Fiji, driven largely by viral social media trends. However, recent investigations and product recalls in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and other countries have revealed alarming safety concerns that should concern all Fijian parents

A recent snap survey conducted by the Consumer Council across local retail stores, variety shops, and online platforms confirmed that these toys are broadly available in Fiji. Alarming, the survey revealed that many of the products sold locally lack basic cautionary statements, adequate safety information, or any clear disclosure of what materials or substances are contained inside them.



The Council is deeply concerned about the health hazards these unvetted toys present. When a squishy toy tears, bursts, or leaks, children face exposure to hazardous chemicals through skin contact, inhalation, hand-to-mouth transfers, or accidental ingestion. Furthermore, many of these toys are filled with substances such as gels, liquids, powders, sand, or water beads, all of which pose severe choking and toxicological risks if released.

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Consumer Council of Fiji Chief Executive Officer Ms. Seema Shandil emphasized that parents and caregivers should not assume a colorful and soft toy is automatically safe for children. She urged consumers to be particularly cautious of cheap, unbranded, or counterfeit products where materials used are unclear, reiterating that children's safety must remain the absolute priority and that any items showing signs of damage, leakage, or strong chemical odors should be avoided entirely.

Ms Shandil added: "We are not saying all squishy toys are dangerous. When used as intended, many are harmless. But the proliferation of counterfeit products, the presence of toxic chemicals, and the dangerous social media trends are causing real harm to children. We must act now to protect Fijian children from these preventable injuries and illnesses."

The local advisory aligns with strong actions taken by product safety authorities globally. In August 2026, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission issued a formal safety warning regarding counterfeit squishy toys containing excessive lead, restricted chemicals, small parts, and hazardous fillings. Similarly, authorities in the United Kingdom have actively seized and recalled various squishy toy models over severe choking, chemical, and physical safety defects.

To address these risks at a regulatory level, the Consumer Council will be formally writing to regulatory authorities to urge swift administrative action and market intervention. In the meantime, the Council will continue monitoring local traders and encourages members of the public who encounter defective, unlabeled, or leaking squishy toys to report them immediately via the Toll-Free Line at 155.

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