

City of Newton



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Public Health
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Parent Information: The Cinnamon Challenge

There have been recent reports of young people engaging in an activity called “The Cinnamon Challenge.” This practice is being promoted via social networking and in You Tube videos. The challenge involves an attempt to eat or swallow a tablespoon of ground cinnamon in under 60 seconds without drinking. This often causes coughing, choking, gagging, watering of the eyes and burning of the mouth and throat.

Dr. Karen Sadler, Newton’s School Physician, said the fad is dangerous, particularly for children with asthma or other respiratory conditions.

“For many kids this is probably just a game that would result in coughing and gagging, but others could inhale cinnamon into the lungs and require emergency care,” she said.

Another concern is an ingredient in cinnamon called cassia that may affect blood clotting, blood sugar levels, or worsen liver disease.

“I encourage parents to talk to their children about why this is an unsafe game,” Sadler said. “This is one of those hidden dangers children may be unaware of. We want all of our children to remain healthy and safe.”

Please call your school nurse if you have any concerns or questions.