

Directorate General for Competition,  
Consumer Affairs  
and Fraud Control

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## Press release

### Slime: a very popular toy putty that is not without risk

**ANSES and the DGCCRF are alerting consumers to the risks associated with making and handling "slime". Slime, a sticky and elastic putty for kneading, is currently very popular with children and adolescents. It is commercially available in ready-to-use form or in kits. It can also be made at home, in order to vary its appearance and texture (by adding colour, glitter, etc.). Tutorials on how to make slime have proliferated on the Internet and offer many recipes, based on ingredients such as paper glue and laundry detergent. Several cases of skin reactions related to the making and handling of "home-made" slime have been reported to ANSES by the poison control centres, the Revidal-Gerda dermato-allergology vigilance network and the AllergOS network. This led ANSES and the DGCCRF to draw attention to the risks associated with contact with toxic products, when misused for the making and handling of "home-made" slime. They also have called on users of the kits sold in toy shops to comply with the precautions for use.**

The making of slime is a very popular creative leisure activity among children and adolescents; they learn to fabricate it themselves from recipes found in tutorials on the Internet which use a wide variety of basic ingredients.

#### **The ingredients used to make it at home contain toxic chemicals.**

The basic ingredient needed to make slime is liquid paper glue, sometimes sold in very large containers. However, this liquid glue contains preservatives, mainly formaldehyde releasers or isothiazolinones, substances that are highly allergenic by the dermal route, as well as many solvents (ethanol, ethyl acetate, methyl acetate) that can cause irritation of the airways.

Boron, in the form of boric acid and its derivatives, is the substance which is almost always used to make the putty elastic. It is added directly in powder form or obtained from certain medical or commercial products: eye- or contact lens-washing liquids or various detergents misused for this purpose.

Regardless of its source, boric acid and its derivatives should never be handled by children repeatedly. In fact, these compounds, which are toxic for fertility and embryofetal development, must not be used for any purpose other than that for which they were marketed, especially since the quantities used when making slime are larger than in the recommended uses.

The repeated and prolonged handling of large quantities of laundry detergent, other detergents or glues can also lead to severe contact dermatitis, because all of these products contain preservatives which are allergenic or irritant. They are not designed for prolonged, intense and repeated contact with

the skin. Several cases of skin and nail damage (burns, redness, eczema, itching), observed by the poison control centres, the Revidal-Gerda dermato-allergology vigilance network and the AllergOS network, have been reported to ANSES.

Furthermore, the use of large containers of glue exposes consumers, especially children, to solvents, some of which can cause irritation of the eyes and airways, and are toxic to the central nervous system.

Lastly, not all the dyes used to manufacture "home-made" slime are food grade or intended for contact with the skin.

**Because of all of the above, ANSES and the DGCCRF are alerting consumers to the risks posed by contact with toxic products when making and handling "home-made" slime.**

The DGCCRF also conducted a survey of the boxed slime kits available on the market. Two out of the 15 kits analysed had a boron content above the authorised limit and have already been recalled and withdrawn from stores.

Given children's enthusiasm for this product, the DGCCRF will be continuing its checks in 2018.

**The DGCCRF also invites parents to ensure compliance with the precautions for use supplied with these kits.**

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