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**CONTACTS:** Douglas Love 914.378.2437  
dlove@consumer.org

or Rachel Zuckerman 914.378.2417  
rzuckerman@consumer.org

## **CONSUMER REPORTS POLL: ONLY ONE-FIFTH OF AMERICANS ARE AWARE THEY PURCHASED A RECALLED PRODUCT**

**National school safety coalition launches “Click, Check and Protect” to help keep unsafe products out of the hands of children**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A new *Consumer Reports* poll finds that only one-fifth of U.S. adults were aware of having purchased food, medication, or a product (other than a car) that was recalled in the past three years. Americans believe it is important to know about product recalls, but they are not confident that they are getting adequate information delivered to them, the survey also revealed.

The results of the poll will be released at The National Press Club in Washington, D.C. on December 13<sup>th</sup> at noon by the newly-formed National School Safety Coalition convened by *Consumer Reports*, the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and the National School Boards Association (NSBA). Coalition partners include the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The coalition distributes safety alerts and recall notices on children’s products including toys, food, medicines, and furniture through a *Consumer Reports* microsite: [www.ClickCheckandProtect.org](http://www.ClickCheckandProtect.org).

Scheduled speakers include a high school student from upstate New York who was recently hospitalized after consuming lettuce that was later recalled.

Among the survey’s other findings:

- Of the 20 percent of the population who believe they purchased a recalled product, nearly 40 percent responded that it was for food, almost 40 percent for a medication, and 24 percent for a product.
- Less than one quarter of Americans researched a product they purchased to see if it was recalled.
- More than half of Americans said they never or rarely filled out the registration cards that come with products.
- Half of Americans were not confident that manufacturers and retailers shared safety information with government agencies and two-fifths lacked confidence that manufacturers and retailers provided consumers with appropriate product recall information.

Tens of millions of children each year are needlessly exposed to unsafe products, toys, and foods that have been recalled by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has asked companies to recall. “Time and time again we’ve seen incidents of

recalled products including bassinets, window blind cords and toys, killing or injuring children,” said Jim Guest, President, *Consumer Reports*. “That’s why the National School Safety Coalition was formed—to get key recall information in the hands of parents and educators to help prevent these tragedies.”

“There have been many improvements this year in the safety of children’s products, which should give parents more confidence in the marketplace. Yet, CPSC still finds dangerous products that need to be recalled. It is so important that parents, teachers and school administrators be aware of and respond to the potentially lifesaving information in our recall announcements,” said CPSC Chairman Inez Tenenbaum. “We at CPSC are proud to be a member of the National School Safety Coalition and we commend Consumers Union for leading this effort to keep children safe.”

### ***Consumer Reports Product Recall Poll***

Regardless of their skepticism regarding the sources of safety information, a large majority of US adults felt that it was extremely important that consumers receive appropriate recall notices for medications and food. They appeared to be less concerned with notices connected to clothing and sporting equipment recalls. However, when it comes to recalls of children’s sporting equipment, people were nearly as concerned that parents get accurate safety information, as they were for children’s food and medication recalls.

“A child shouldn’t be put at risk of injury or death simply because the information on recalled products didn’t get to schools, caregivers and parents,” said Guest.

While only 20 percent of US consumers were concerned that they personally missed a recall announcement in the past 3 years, some groups were more concerned than others. For example, concern appears to decrease with age. More than a quarter of 18 to 24 year old consumers were concerned they missed a product recall notice. This compares to less than a sixth of all consumers 65 years old and older. Parents of school and/or pre-school age children were also slightly more apt to be worried about missing such announcements than were other adults (26% vs. 19%).

Consumers were more likely to find out about product recalls from the news than any other source. Nearly two-thirds of those consumers who had experienced a recent food recall and a slight majority of those who purchased a recalled medication found out about the recall from a news report. Finding out about product recalls was somewhat more varied. While a plurality of those who purchased a recalled product were informed of the recall via the news, a sixth found out about the recall from the manufacturer and a little more than a tenth from family, friends or coworkers.

The Consumer Reports Product Recalls survey is based on a nationally representative sample of American adults, conducted by the Consumer Reports National Research Center. A total of 2,005 landline and cellular random digit dial (RDD) telephone interviews were completed among adults aged 18+. Interviewing took place between August 19 and August 29, 2010. The margin of error is +/- 2.6 points at a 95 % confidence level.

### **About Consumers Union**

Consumers Union, the publisher of *Consumer Reports*, is an expert, independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to work for a fair, just, and safe marketplace for all consumers and to empower consumers. To achieve this mission, CU tests, informs, and protects. To maintain independence and impartiality, CU accepts no outside advertising, no free test samples, and has no agenda other than the interests of consumers. CU supports itself through the sale of information products and services, individual contributions, and a few noncommercial grants. CU’s flagship publication, *Consumer Reports*

magazine, has a circulation of more than 4 million, while the magazine's Web site ConsumerReports.org has over 3.2 million paid subscribers and is the largest subscription-based Web site in the industry. In addition, CU has successfully launched and expanded Consumer Reports on Health, Consumer Reports Money Adviser, and, most recently, ShopSmart magazine.

### **About the National Parent Teacher Association**

The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

### **About the National School Boards Association**

Founded in 1940, the National School Boards Association ([www.nsba.org](http://www.nsba.org)) is a not-for-profit federation of state associations of school boards representing 95,000 local school board members throughout the United States. Its mission is to foster excellence and equity in public elementary and secondary education through local school board leadership. NSBA represents the school board perspective in working with federal government agencies and national organizations that impact education, and provides vital information

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