

## **Sawbones 216: Don't Eat Tide Pods**

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**Clint:** Sawbones is a show about medical history, and nothing the hosts say should be taken as medical advice or opinion. It's for fun. Can't you just have fun for an hour and not try to diagnose your mystery boil? We think you've earned it. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy a moment of distraction from that weird growth. You're worth it.

[theme music plays]

**Justin:** Hello everybody, and welcome to Sawbones: a marital tour of misguided medicine. I'm your cohost, Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:** And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:** Hi Syd.

**Sydnee:** Hi Justin.

**Justin:** I'm excited about this episode, this week.

**Sydnee:** Well, thank you. I am too. Last week, if you listened to our episode last week, if you listen to them in order, which Justin would probably insist you do. You like to watch TV shows in order, I bet you—do you consume podcasts in order, too?

**Justin:** Not with stuff like this. Like, with 99% Invisible, Stuff You Should Know...

**Sydnee:** You skip around?

**Justin:** I'll skip around, yeah.

**Sydnee:** Well, if you didn't listen last week—

**Justin:** If something looks boring, like if my boys Chuck and Josh or my homie Roman posted up a rock, then I'll just be like, "Sorry guys. That's looks like a rock. You posted a rock. I'm gonna skip it."

**Sydnee:** Wow, you're putting them on blast.

**Justin:** Skip it.

**Sydnee:** Well last week wasn't—

**Justin:** That never happens.

**Sydnee:** No, of course not.

**Justin:** But if it did.

**Sydnee:** Of course not. Last week wasn't boring, because we had a very important episode where we told everybody to not drink dirty water.

**Justin:** And apparently, we had to do that.

**Sydnee:** Because people drank dirty water. Well, this brought up another interesting topic. A lot of you out there in the internets took to Twitter and Facebook and email and even some people in person to tell me that there was another problem, another new trend that is plaguing our nation's youth.

It's not dirty water. That's reserved for people who have enough money to pay for dirty water. No, no, no, this is a teen problem. And that's teens are apparently eating laundry detergent.

**Justin:** Aw, teens. Tell me at least Syd, just tell me they're at least getting high. Are they getting high on it?

**Sydnee:** [laughs] They are not getting high on it. And I also will say, we're going to record this episode today, and I'm going to tell you about how teens are eating Tide pods, but you can't find this now, because I saw that YouTube are Facebook are refusing to post these videos anymore.

**Justin:** [laughs] It's a cover-up!

**Sydnee:** Of kids eating Tide pods.

**Justin:** It's a conspiracy!

**Sydnee:** Well, I think to try to—

**Justin:** What are you afraid of, YouTube?

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I think to try to stop... maybe to stop the epidemic?

**Justin:** Hey, papa Mark, what are you so scared of?

**Sydnee:** So yes, of course, that's always part of it. It's not enough to just eat a Tide pod, you have to put it on the internet.

**Justin:** Sure. If you eat a Tide pod alone, for no one... [laughs] I don't know, maybe you have pica, I don't know.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] It's possible. But thank you everybody, there were too—I mean, really, it was too numerous to name everyone who suggested this topic. I didn't think that we would need to tell people not to eat laundry detergent, but here we are.

**Justin:** Here we are.

**Sydnee:** And it isn't the only weird social media dare that has medical implications. So, we can get into some of those, too. But let's start with Tide pods. So, if you're not familiar, Tide pods are tiny little plastic containers. Little, teeny pod-looking things.

**Justin:** Vessels.

**Sydnee:** Yes. Of laundry detergent.

**Justin:** Right.

**Sydnee:** They do look like candy.

**Justin:** They look delicious.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] But like candy.

**Justin:** Not as much as the Finish dishwasher tabs that we have. Like, literally 100% looks like it has a Spree, like a cherry Spree, embedded in the top of it. It looks delicious.

**Sydnee:** Yes, and even the wrapper apparently does, because that was the first thing Charlie said upon seeing the container of these little dish detergent tablets, was, "Is that candy? Can I eat it?" So, we keep them away, by the way, we're responsible.

**Justin:** With the dish tabs, do you squeeze those into the detergent dispenser, or do you throw them in with the wash, do you think?

**Sydnee:** No, I think you throw them in.

**Justin:** You throw them in? That seems right.

**Sydnee:** Because they dissolve. Because my understanding is that the way that people are ingesting these laundry detergent packets are by putting them on their tongue and letting them dissolve in their mouths. They're not—I don't think you actually eat them. I think, like, the dare is kind of how long can you let it sit in your mouth and dissolve.

**Justin:** Okay, so this is—would you classify this on the big Sydnee McElroy scale of ideas as a good one or a bad one?

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I would say this is a bad idea.

**Justin:** Okay.

**Sydnee:** And I think most of us know not to eat laundry detergent, I mean, intuitively. Because it's called laundry detergent. And it's used for cleaning clothes. So, that's probably enough. But if you are interested, and you want to know why maybe you shouldn't, scientifically...

So laundry detergent—and it's really easy to find the ingredients of laundry detergent, by the way, this is not a secret. I'm certain that's it's on the packaging for Tide pods. We don't have them, but I'm certain it is. You could also Google, "What's in a Tide pod?" and Tide will tell you. They have all their ingredients listed on their website. It's very clear. And what they all are. It's not hard.

**Justin:** Very few of the ingredients are edible, I'm assuming.

**Sydnee:** None. I would say there are many ingredients, none of them are food.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** None of them provide any nutritional benefit. Many of them are not food, but probably not...

**Justin:** *Not* food?

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Dangerous. They're just no beneficial. But there are a few specifically that are dangerous. So, one thing is—

**Justin:** The only thing that separates food and non-food is believing in yourself.

**Sydnee:** Mm, no. In this case it's, like, gastrointestinal irritation and bleeding and...

**Justin:** Fine.

**Sydnee:** So, they do contain, Tide pods and detergent in general, contain surfactants, which are things that help to kind of bind grease and create, like, these super-molecules with grease inside to get it off of your clothing, right? That's how it's lifting the dirt and grime and greasy stuff off of your dirty clothes.

Well, they will also bind fats and water that are naturally inside your intestines, and this will cause a lot of irritation to the lining of your stomach and your intestines and your esophagus and everything else. Which is why you're not supposed to eat it.

And that's the best-case scenario. You could also have massive vomiting as a result of this. There have been cases of people, like, foaming at the mouth. You can have, obviously, severe abdominal pain, diarrhea, and it can cause some severe inflammation of your intestines if you eat enough.

**Justin:** We should mention, by the way, and we should have mentioned this up front, but we'll mention it here. This is not going to be a particularly historical episode of Sawbones.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Justin:** Because YouTube was just invented fairly recently in the grand scheme of things. This is more, I would describe, as a public service episode of Sawbones.

**Sydnee:** Sure.

**Justin:** If you wanna do, for example... we don't encourage this with any of our other shows, or episodes of this show, but if you wanted to split this one up into discrete YouTube videos that you upload to YouTube to try to just push back the tide a little bit, you are... thank you.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** You are more than welcome to do so. You have our official legal permission for this episode. [laughs] To just, like, spread the word however you can.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. Go for it. Yeah, no, Pliny the Elder has nothing to say about Tide pods.

**Justin:** No.

**Sydnee:** So, this is all correct.

**Justin:** Pliny the Elder probably would have said don't eat Tide pods. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Even Pliny. Even Pliny would have told you not to do this.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** It also has a form of bleach, which... it's bad to drink bleach.

**Justin:** I knew there was something about drinking bleach. I couldn't remember, thank you.

**Sydnee:** It's a caustic substance. I mean, it could erode the inside of your esophagus or your intestines. Please don't eat or drink bleach. It contains alcohol and polyethylene glycol, both of which will make you, if you drink enough or eat enough of these, make you go to sleep and not wake up. Like, permanent sleep.

And also, because of all the irritation to your stomach and esophagus and the vomiting that can happen, you can aspirate these substances, meaning that you accidentally inhale them into your lungs. And it would cause a lot of damage to your lungs. Inflammation and, you know, damage to the tissues of your lungs. So, they're dangerous, don't eat them, that's bad. And, oh also, there's hydrogen peroxide in there, by the way. Just throwing that out there, too. You can't eat that either.

And if you don't—I mean, if this is not proof enough, that I'm telling you these substances are bad for you and you shouldn't eat them, there have been cases of people accidentally ingesting Tide pods and unfortunately dying as a result of that. Because Tide pods and other, I mean, I keep

saying Tide but I guess any kinda laundry detergent pod, they do... they're colorful, they look like candy.

Because of this problem, there have been cases of toddlers and older persons who have dementia eating these, thinking that they were some sort of food, and actually perishing from that. So, we know that they can kill you. Please don't put them in your mouth. Please don't eat them.

**Justin:** Hey, Tide? Like, I don't wanna lay a lot of the blame at your feet, broadly speaking, but like... could we just maybe stick with the bottle?

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** The bottle seemed to be good for a long time. Maybe we just stick with the bottle, eh?

**Sydnee:** Well, they did things. There were complaints because they looked so much like candy, and so they initially put them in different—like, the entire package became opaque. They used to come in, like, these clear plastic things, so you could see all the candy-looking substance inside, and that made it more attractive looking.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** And then they put warnings to store them in places where kids couldn't get to them. So, they tried to make attempts to stop people from accidentally eating them. But I don't know how you stop people from intentionally eating them.

**Justin:** Yeah. Thank you, yes.

**Sydnee:** I mean, even if they didn't look so—I don't know.

**Justin:** Alright, so what's our next challenge? So, the final statement on that one is, don't eat Tide pods.

**Sydnee:** Please don't eat Tide pods. Don't drink dirty water, don't eat Tide pods.

There are some other challenges that you can find. A lot of these are on YouTube, because if you're gonna do these things, why not show your friends and all of the internet as well? Specifically aimed at teenagers.

One is called the cinnamon challenge. This is not new. This has been around for a couple years now.

**Justin:** Mm hmm. Quite a while.

**Sydnee:** Disappointingly, my sister has taken part in the cinnamon challenge. She told me she's very good at it.

**Justin:** Oh no.

**Sydnee:** Yes. So, the cinnamon challenge basically means you're going to eat a tablespoon of cinnamon within 60 seconds.

**Justin:** Great.

**Sydnee:** And of course, you wanna put this on YouTube, because what is supposed to happen is you can't. Because that's such an irritant that to try to eat that amount, that quantity of cinnamon that quickly, usually you'll sort of choke, vomit, expel a big dust of cinnamon, a big cloud of cinnamon dust into the air.

**Justin:** I've seen people do it. It looks very funny, I will say.

**Sydnee:** Right. The problem is that you can aspirate that cinnamon into your lungs, and it is an irritant, and it will you damage to your lungs, and you can end up in the hospital with basically amounting to chemical burns, sort of, on your lungs. Pneumonitis inflammation. And this has happened. Kids have been hospitalized because of the cinnamon challenge.

**Justin:** Okay, so no on the—so, you're a no on the cinnamon challenge?

**Sydnee:** Yes. I'm a no on the cinnamon challenge. I know it seems funny, and if the worst case was it made your stomach upset a little bit, and so maybe you threw up later, I guess that wouldn't be so bad. Except no, you might aspirate that into your lungs and get seriously ill. So, please don't do this.

**Justin:** Back a long time ago, a guy whose name sadly escapes me at the moment, because this was, like, five or six years ago... when we first had My Brother, My Brother and Me t-shirts available for sale, a guy got on Tosh.0 doing the cinnamon challenge wearing a My Brother, My Brother and Me t-shirt, and it was, like, the best.



**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Like, it was the best thing that had ever happened for me.

**Sydnee:** It was a big moment for you.

**Justin:** Yeah, it was huge. I didn't know he was risking burns to his lungs, so for that, I am sorry.

**Sydnee:** Please don't do—please don't, a personal plead to my sister Riley, please don't do the cinnamon challenge ever again. Please don't do this.

The next one that I found, and I cross-referenced, I double-checked all these with my 17-year-old sister to make sure these were real.

**Justin:** Yeah, 'cause you are gonna be doing sort of a crossover episode, right?

**Sydnee:** Exactly, on my other podcast, Still Buffering, that I do with my two sisters, where we talk about the teenage experience. We're going to kinda get into some of these challenges and why in the world...

**Justin:** A more psychological take on these.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, why do teens do this? So, another one that, again, seems pretty obvious. I saw it called the hand sanitizer challenge, also called the fire challenge.

**Justin:** Hmm. This one sounds, like, pretty obvious.

**Sydnee:** This gives you an idea of where the—what might be happening. Basically, it's videos of people squirting hand sanitizer on themselves and then catching it on fire, because it's got alcohol in it. And it looks like you're holding fire, which I guess makes you look cool, until it burns you. Because it's fire. That you're putting on your skin.

**Justin:** Got it. This seems like an easy one. This is a slam dunk.

**Sydnee:** Mm-hmm. And there has been at least one case of a child who ended up in the hospital with second and third degree burns to a third of his body as a result of taking part in one of these challenges.

**Justin:** Ugh, God.

**Sydnee:** Because it's—you shouldn't set yourself on fire.

**Justin:** Man, it's—I can't decide what's worse, that people are doing this, or people that do it get hospitalized so you can't even make hilarious jokes about it without feeling like a dirtbag.

**Sydnee:** No. Well, how about this? The frostbite challenge—

**Justin:** Thank you, yes.

**Sydnee:** I think for the most part, while it is doing damage and it is not intelligent to do this to yourself, I would say, I don't think there are as many cases of people ending up in the hospital.

The frostbite challenge entails taking some salt and pouring it on your arm, and then putting an ice cube over it. Or, I guess you put it on any part of your body, but arm seemed to be very popular in the YouTube videos I saw. And it lowers the temperature of the ice, so that it precipitates frostbite in that area of your skin. And I imagine it is uncomfortable. It's painful.

**Justin:** It's the same way... it's the same theory behind putting—when you're doing, like, an ice cream maker, right? Where you add salt to it, to bring it to like, zero degrees Fahrenheit or whatever.

**Sydnee:** Exactly. And so, you can induce frostbite on your skin. I saw videos of people actually doing this in bathtubs.

**Justin:** Ugh.

**Sydnee:** Putting salt and ice in bathtubs and getting in.

**Justin:** [shudders]

**Sydnee:** That's a terrible idea. Now, you could do some major damage if you did that for a sustained period of time. Please don't do this at all though, because at the very least, you end up with these areas of frostbite on your skin that are painful and, I mean, you've damaged your skin.

**Justin:** You damaged your skin. It's frostbite, man, come on.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Remember Robert Falcon Scott and Amundsen? When they were headed out to the South Pole? Do you know how much work they put in trying to avoid this exact situation that you've invited on yourself? [tuts]

**Sydnee:** And you're just doing it. You're just doing it. The next one that I found was called the condom challenge. And when I asked my sister about the condom challenge, she said, "Which one?" [laughs]

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** So, one, apparently there is one version of the condom challenge that involves, like, filling a condom with water and then throwing it at a friend or something, which didn't seem particularly dangerous.

**Justin:** That's a water balloon. That one's alright.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, that was, I mean, I guess unpleasant. But that's about it. So that one didn't merit a mention. But the other condom challenge that I did find pretty concerning was you, I guess, you sort of insert a condom into your nose and try to sort of snort it up your nose, and then reach into the back of your mouth and pull it out of your mouth.

**Justin:** Okay. Does that work?

**Sydnee:** Well, I mean, you can do this, but the fear is that as you're trying to inhale the condom, you will inhale the condom and choke on it.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** And can you imagine a more embarrassing emergency room visit?

**Justin:** No.

**Sydnee:** Or 911 phone call?

**Justin:** No.

**Sydnee:** Than, "I have intentionally inhaled a condom and it's stuck in my throat." Or, "My friend has intentionally inhaled a condom and it's stuck in his throat and I don't know what to do."

**Justin:** “My friend inhaled a condom. We’re still on Twitch though, so we have to keep the stream running. We’re getting a lot of subs. And if you could just hurry, it’d be a great end to the video.”

**Sydnee:** [laughs] So, that would be my advice. Not only is this very dangerous, because you don’t wanna aspirate anything, like, any piece of latex. But certainly—yeah, but also, really? Do you want, I mean, do you know what that’s gonna look like when you show up in the ER and they put your chief complaint on the list and on the board, and here we’ve got all the other people with, like, their stomach illnesses and their flu and all that, and yours says “inhaled condom”?

**Justin:** Inhaled condom.

**Sydnee:** Inhaled condom.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** Don’t do it. There was one that I found called the compressed air challenge. Which is, you know those cans of compressed air that you can, like, clean off your keyboard with or whatever?

**Justin:** Uh-huh.

**Sydnee:** It’s really cold.

**Justin:** Oh yeah. If you turn it upside down.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. So, you just spray it on your arm for as long as you can tolerate.

**Justin:** Did this one.

**Sydnee:** You’ve done this one?

**Justin:** [laughs] This one was a thing when I was a teen, we did do this one. It was not—maybe we didn’t do it for a sustained period of time. It was more weaponized. So, like, you would sneak up on somebody who didn’t know you were gonna do it and then, like, blast them.

**Sydnee:** See, the video where I—I didn’t know what exactly they were doing so I had to see the video, and they were, like, hold still, see how

long I can spray this on you and you can, like, tolerate it. Which is dangerous. It gets super cold and you can damage your skin.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** So that's a bad idea. And then another one which probably will not, for the most part, cause lasting damage, but is still a form of... I mean, you're hurting yourself, is the Kylie Jenner challenge. I'm sure you've heard of that one.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That one was pretty popular. Where you take, like, a shot glass and you put it over your lips and then you, you know, apply suction so that your—

**Justin:** Create a vacuum.

**Sydnee:** Exactly. And then it makes your—

**Justin:** You suck.

**Sydnee:** Yes. And it makes your lips very large and swollen and... it hurts.

**Justin:** It hurts.

**Sydnee:** And they look bruised and... it's bad.

**Justin:** It's bad. This one's bad, gang.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Don't... and what is—what is your—what is the plan after that? Look— now I look like Kylie Jenner? Is that...

**Justin:** For a few minutes? I mean...

**Sydnee:** Well, I mean, people are doing this and they do enough damage that it lasts for a couple days.

**Justin:** Ugh.

**Sydnee:** Yeah.

**Justin:** Yeah, there's not a good exit strategy on that.

**Sydnee:** No. And why would you—"I was doing it because it was funny because it's sort of like..."

**Justin:** "I did it for the Vine."

**Sydnee:** No.

**Justin:** "I did it for the Vine." That's all there is to it. That's all you gotta say, Syd. "I did it for the Vine." Even though Vine doesn't exist anymore, but it will come back. We all know this in our hearts. I know you have to have more for me.

**Sydnee:** I've got a few more for you, but Justin, before I tell you about these, why don't we head to the billing department?

[ad break]

**Justin:** So, you had some other challenges, Syd, you were gonna hit me with.

**Sydnee:** That's right, Justin. Some of these, I think, are a little older and they even kind of remind me of things I feel like we may have done when we were younger. Like, you mentioned you had tried the compressed air challenge. The eraser challenge, which is just rubbing an eraser on your skin for, like... it's usually you have to do some sort of thing and rub the eraser on your skin for the entire duration of it, like reciting the alphabet or something like that.

**Justin:** Yeugh.

**Sydnee:** Right. So, it's like, again, it's like an endurance challenge. Can you do it for that length of time? And I feel like that kinda thing used to happen in class sometimes.

**Justin:** Sure, yeah. A lot of skin friction-based entertainment in those days.

**Sydnee:** Exactly. Exactly. Obviously, this does damage to your skin. If it's deep enough, other than, like, bleeding and things, you can cause permanent scarring. It can also lead to infection. If you have a big open wound that you've just ground a dirty eraser into.

**Justin:** Gross! There's better ways to spend your day.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, exactly. Along those same lines, I found the deodorant challenge. This specifically is spray deodorant, like aerosol deodorant, which I've not used that in a long time.

**Justin:** You know what? I don't—

**Sydnee:** I'm assuming that's still around.

**Justin:** I don't know about you, listener, but I don't like a wet deodorant.

**Sydnee:** Mm-mm.

**Justin:** I like a cake.

**Sydnee:** I like a stick.

**Justin:** A stick, a powder. I can't do the gels, I can't do the sprays, it just—it doesn't feel like I'm protected down there.

**Sydnee:** No.

**Justin:** This sounds like the beginning of an ad for powder deodorant on this show, but like, no. No. That's just my preference.

**Sydnee:** I'm with you, I'm with you. I just like the stick.

**Justin:** Just gimme a stick. Don't gimme the stick.

**Sydnee:** I don't even know what brand it is. I just know what the thing looks like that I've been buying since, like, middle school.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm. I think it's Suave.

**Sydnee:** Is it?

**Justin:** Strong enough for a man, pH balanced for a woman.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] I just get kinda locked into things and keep using them. But anyway, spray aerosol deodorants—

**Justin:** I like Mitchum, because it says it's strong enough to skip a day.

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That's not true, Mitchum. But whatever.

**Justin:** I'm into it.

**Sydnee:** No. Spray aerosol deodorant, you just spray it on your skin. That's the whole thing. I didn't know that this would happen, but you end up with, like, a lot of little abrasions and bruises on your skin if you spray it close range for a sustained period of time.

**Justin:** Whoa.

**Sydnee:** It's not, like, the aerosol as much as just the pressure. Like, the impact.

**Justin:** Okay. Oh.

**Sydnee:** Of it hitting your skin.

**Justin:** Weird. Interesting, I didn't know that.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, and I saw videos of this, of people with kinda like little bruises and abrasions all up and down their arms from spraying themselves for long periods of time with spray deodorant.

**Justin:** God, we'll just find anything, huh?

**Sydnee:** [laughs]

**Justin:** Just can't leave any daylight there. We'll just find whatever we can to just, do it.

**Sydnee:** We started off with eating laundry detergent, so where did you think this was gonna go?

**Justin:** Yeah, that's true, it's all sort of downhill from there.

**Sydnee:** One that I guess was pretty popular for a while, like, that I even read was done on, like, late night talk shows and things, was the gallon challenge. Did you ever see anybody do this?

**Justin:** No.



**Sydnee:** You have to drink a gallon of milk in an hour.

**Justin:** No. [laughs]

**Sydnee:** And not throw it up.

**Justin:** [shudders]

**Sydnee:** Those are the general rules. Any kind of milk will do, I saw that mentioned several times. Two percent, skim, vitamin D. Whatever your preference is.

**Justin:** Probably skim, right? If you were gonna do it.

**Sydnee:** It doesn't matter because this is a volume problem.

**Justin:** If you were gonna do it.

**Sydnee:** I wouldn't do it.

**Justin:** Okay, but if you were gonna do it.

**Sydnee:** I wouldn't do it.

**Justin:** Skim, or whole, or what would you do?

**Sydnee:** I'm not even gonna commit to that. I wouldn't do it. I would never drink a gallon of milk in an hour, that's gross.

**Justin:** Okay, but if you were gonna do it, would you do skim or whole or...

**Sydnee:** No. I will say this, okay, if we're gonna—

**Justin:** Would you do chocolate?

**Sydnee:** If we're gonna do this thought experiment, part of the problem is the volume. Your stomach holds about a half-gallon, generally speaking, so... this is a problem. You cannot hold a gallon of milk in your stomach. So, it's gotta go somewhere.

**Justin:** Where does it go?

**Sydnee:** It comes up and out.

**Justin:** Wait, now you're—

**Sydnee:** You throw up.

**Justin:** What you're suggesting is that it's impossible. It's gotta be able to go other places.

**Sydnee:** Here's the problem. You start to break down the milk in your stomach, but it doesn't—it actually, because of the fat in it, it doesn't immediately pass through to the small intestine as it's being broken down.

It actually, the volume slightly increases. And these materials take longer to pass into the small intestine. So, I mean, I guess if you're asking about head to head different kinds of milk, it would make skim milk a more ideal substance than full fat milk.

**Justin:** Chocolate or not? Chocolate or not?

**Sydnee:** No, I think chocolate would only make it worse.

**Justin:** Okay, interesting.

**Sydnee:** And then the sugar, I think that would be—I think then the yuck factor, just the gagging would come into play.

**Justin:** Yeah, that'd be tough.

**Sydnee:** But the point is, I think it's—I'm certain people have managed to achieve this, I guess. Achieve? Is that the word?

**Justin:** [laughs] Achieve. Achieve, technically speaking, yes.

**Sydnee:** Is that the word I wanna use? I'm sure people have, but generally speaking, for most of us it would be impossible. Your stomach isn't gonna hold that much. You're gonna get sick, and you're going to throw up. Now, I guess other than it's not good to throw up, like, don't...

**Justin:** You always run a risk of, like, rupturing a blood vessel or something when you throw up, right?

**Sydnee:** Exactly. You can get little tears in your esophagus, and again, if you're vomiting violently enough, we worry about aspiration, about you sucking that back down into your airways. But I did find specifically one

incident of a fraternity that did a gallon challenge for new recruits, and they did it on a bridge. And they ended up puking into oncoming traffic below and causing a traffic accident.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** So...

**Justin:** [laughs] That is serious.

**Sydnee:** Unforeseen consequences...

**Justin:** Now it's serious.

**Sydnee:** From the gallon challenge. I think this was very popular a few years back, but not so much nowadays. I don't think kids are doing this as much. One that also is older was the choking game. Did you ever do this with your friends?

**Justin:** I did this one, yeah. I did this one.

**Sydnee:** I did too. I'm a little embarrassed to admit, I have done this.

**Justin:** Yeah. In retrospect it does seem pretty buck wild of me to have done.

**Sydnee:** As I began to think, "I did this once," I was a little shocked and disappointed in myself.

**Justin:** I've never experienced anything quite like it.

**Sydnee:** No. So, the version that I remember was you, like, bend over and hyperventilate. Like, you try to breathe really fast, and then someone kinda like, grabs you from behind and you hold your breath all at once.

**Justin:** Yeah, that's exactly how I remember it going down.

**Sydnee:** Yeah. And then you pass out.

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** That's the goal. That's the game!

**Justin:** That's the game. This was before—like, on the one hand, the first half of this show I was like, "Ugh, YouTube." But now, like, the longer this part is going on, I've been more like, "Thanks YouTube, for giving teens something else to do." I mean, like, statistically speaking, maybe it's better. I don't know.

**Sydnee:** I don't know if it made us worse that we did this kind of thing and we didn't have an audience...

**Justin:** Yeah.

**Sydnee:** We did it... for fun? I mean, for me, it was like a slumber party activity.

**Justin:** Exactly, yeah. I did it at church camp.

**Sydnee:** So, it was not like you did it just you and your buddy. It was, like, a group of people. But this is not a wise thing to do. If you deprive your brain of oxygen long enough, you can get brain damage. So, I'm not saying that that's highly likely, but I'm saying it's possible, and why do you need to pass out? So, don't.

**Justin:** You don't need to pass out.

**Sydnee:** Don't do this. Some scarier ones I found, some more recent ones that I was little disturbed by... One is called the 48-hour challenge. I guess there was a version of it originally, I think in France, somewhere in Europe. It was the 72-hour challenge and, I don't know, we're lazy here in the US so it's the 48-hour challenge for us.

**Justin:** Sure.

**Sydnee:** But basically, the idea is you go missing for 48 hours.

**Justin:** [laughs] Great.

**Sydnee:** Intentionally. And you try to see how much social media heat you can generate with your absence.

**Justin:** Oh God.

**Sydnee:** How many posts like, "Where is so-and-so?" and, like, your parents are scared and posting about you. And that's the whole thing.

**Justin:** This one isn't really medical. But just, like, as a parent of a three-year-old, please, every kid ever, please never do this.

**Sydnee:** Don't ever do this.

**Justin:** Please.

**Sydnee:** This is horrible.

**Justin:** You're somebody's kid. Please don't do this.

**Sydnee:** Don't do this. This is a horrible thing to do.

**Justin:** Don't do this thing.

**Sydnee:** Another one that sounds silly, but it actually has resulted in a lot of injury, is the duct tape challenge.

**Justin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:** So, you duct tape somebody to a pole.

**Justin:** [snorts]

**Sydnee:** And by duct tape to a pole—I was reading about the injuries, they're off the ground. You duct tape them not just to the pole, but like off the ground, high up on the pole.

**Justin:** [laughs] Hurry up and tell me why this is serious so I'll stop laughing at it.

**Sydnee:** Well, because then you have to get down on your own.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** And people have fallen and injured themselves.

**Justin:** Alright, I knew you were gonna say that.

**Sydnee:** Like, skull fracture injured themselves.

**Justin:** Aw man, alright. That's a bummer.

**Sydnee:** So, please don't do this. Because it's hard to un-duct tape yourself from a pole in mid-air and not fall and injure yourself.

**Justin:** Sydnee, why do teens do this? Why does this happen?

**Sydnee:** [laughs] So, I can't give you a complete answer. There's theories. People have actually studied this. And the idea that teens engage in risk-taking behavior that adults typically wouldn't, that's not new.

**Justin:** No.

**Sydnee:** And usually, historically, these studies have been done on, like, drinking or using illegal drugs, or that kind of risky behavior. Maybe high risk sexual behavior, those kinds of things.

**Justin:** Right.

**Sydnee:** Not so much, like, YouTube challenges.

**Justin:** Eating lots of pizza.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] Exactly—well, I mean, things that as adults we choose not to do because they know they will harm us or make us sick.

**Justin:** Right. And also, teens don't have heartburn, so...

**Sydnee:** [laughs] It's so unfair. They did one study... this was actually, I think, a little disappointing, and if I were a teenager, I would find it a little insulting, where they tried to figure out if—basically, the idea is, teens are more comfortable with uncertainty than adults are.

So, to use Tide pods as an example, I don't know what will happen when I eat a Tide pod. I am comfortable with that uncertainty, so I will eat one and see. Or as an adult, I don't know what will happen when I eat a Tide pod. It might hurt me, I don't think I'm okay with that.

**Justin:** Right.

**Sydnee:** And the next step was they—so, in the study, they talked about different probabilities of winning this prize money. And like, they had teens take various chances to try to win this prize money. And then part of what they did was, um, offer them more information on, like, the

nature of the prize and their chance of winning and things like that, by just clicking on a link to find out more information.

And what they found is that teenagers are much less likely to even go seek out more information, even when it's readily available to them, than adults are. So, as a teen, you are much less likely to Google "what happens when I eat a Tide pod," even though that information is readily available to you.

**Justin:** Right. Yeah.

**Sydnee:** As adults, we are much more likely to go try to figure out what are the risks of this behavior.

**Justin:** We're less comfortable with the ambiguity.

**Sydnee:** Yes. So, kids are more comfortable with ambiguity and less likely to try to resolve the ambiguity. And that's true for any risk taking behavior. That's part of the problem, and the other part of the problem is that they have found that those hits you get on YouTube when you do these challenges and post them, you are getting literal hits of dopamine for that as well.

**Justin:** Yeah, of course.

**Sydnee:** It's addictive, in a sense. It's a reward-seeking thing. It's just like, again, other addictive behaviors like smoking or alcohol or drugs or winning at a video game, or some other kind of game of chance, you know, challenge, a lottery or, you know, slot machines, that kinda thing.

You get that same kind of, like, dopamine reward every time you get more views and more likes and more comments. So, there's an addictive quality. You begin to seek out more opportunities to get that kind of attention, no matter how negative they are.

**Justin:** What I'm hearing you say Syd, is maybe doing it for the Vine isn't doing it for such a great reason at all.

**Sydnee:** [laughs] No, because at the end of the day, I think that it's very positive that these outlets are taking down these videos. Because there is nothing—there is no glory in eating a Tide pod and living to tell the tale.

**Justin:** [laughs]

**Sydnee:** No one will want to hire you for a job more because of it, or give you a scholarship, or date you, or be your buddy.

**Justin:** So...

**Sydnee:** So... [laughs]

**Justin:** There you go, folks.

**Sydnee:** There's no glory in it.

**Justin:** There's no glory in eating a Tide pod.

**Sydnee:** Teens have always done risky things. We did when we were younger, we've always done things that...

**Justin:** Right, it's not new.

**Sydnee:** Right. I think the only problem now is that, with social media, there is a new reward for doing risky things. Especially risky things that are risky enough to be visually upsetting and disturbing. Because then you can post them on the internet, and not just tell your friends about them. So, maybe that just incentivizes even worse kind of risks.

**Justin:** So, in closing, don't eat Tide pods.

**Sydnee:** Please. Please.

**Justin:** That's gonna do it for us folks, this week. Thank you so much for listening. Thank you to you at home for taking the time to hang out with us every week. It really does mean the world.

Thank you to some folks who sent us some stuff in the PO box that we got. You can find the address for that at [McElroyShows.com](http://McElroyShows.com) if you want it. Angela sent us Giblets the bunny, which Charlie just loves. It's a bunny with a bunch of stuffed organs.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, she does love it.

**Justin:** Wendy sent her book, Emma sent some burger cookies, thank you Kathy for bookmarks, Shea sent pins and buttons, Margaret sent



beautiful baby blankets, and Quinn made soap that we just adore. So, thank you to all of y'all for that stuff.

**Sydnee:** Yeah, thank you so much, That's so kind of you.

**Justin:** And your cards and letters and everything. We obviously can't respond to all those, but we read every one, and it really means the world to us. So, thank you so much for doing that. Thank you... did I thank The Taxpayers?

**Sydnee:** Not yet.

**Justin:** For letting us use their song "Medicines" as the intro of our program?

**Sydnee:** Now you did.

**Justin:** Now I did. And folks, that's gonna do it for us. So, until next time, I'm Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:** I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:** And as always, don't drill a hole in your head.

[theme music plays]

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