

Hearing Aid Help

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What to do if a Battery is Swallowed

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Youngsters, and sometimes oldsters, sometimes swallow “button cells”, which includes hearing aid batteries. This is an uncommon but serious matter. The following information is from the National Capital Poison Center:

1. If a button cell is swallowed, call the 24-hour National Button Battery Ingestion Hotline at 202-625-3333 immediately.
2. If available, provide the battery identification number from the package or from a matching battery.
3. An X-ray must be obtained immediately to be sure that the battery has gone through the esophagus into the stomach. Do not wait for symptoms to develop before getting an X-ray. If the battery remains in the esophagus, it must be removed immediately. Batteries lodged in the esophagus can cause serious burns in just 2 hours. Battery removal is done with an endoscope; surgery is rarely indicated. Do NOT give ipecac.
4. If a battery has moved beyond the esophagus, it can be expected to pass by itself. Passage may take days, even months. Removal is NOT indicated if the battery has passed beyond the esophagus and the patient is asymptomatic. Once you are sure the battery is not in the esophagus, the patient can be sent home to wait for the battery to pass. Watch for fever, abdominal pain, vomiting or blood in the stools.
5. Send passed battery to: National Capital Poison Center, 3201 New Mexico Ave, Suite 310, Washington DC 20016.

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