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Coin-Sized Batteries Pose Deadly Threat to Toddlers, the Elderly

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We've all seen those coin-sized batteries. They're called "button batteries" and they power all sorts of devices from hearing aids to remote controls. As these little batteries become more common, the number of serious battery related injuries has risen dramatically. In fact, a recent study by Dr. Toby Litovitz of the National Capital Poison Center found that button battery-related incidents have increased sevenfold since 1985.

Those most at risk are children under 4 years-old and the elderly. Children are often injured when they pick up exposed batteries or remove batteries from games, toys, calculators, remote controls and other items. Often, parents don't realize a child swallowed the battery. Senior adults have swallowed button batteries used in hearing aids after mistaking them for pills.

Batteries can lodge in the throat or intestine and can cause chemical burns in as little as two hours. For some fortunate patients, swallowed batteries will pass intact through the intestine.

More than 60 percent of reported incidents are initially misdiagnosed. Symptoms resemble ailments common in children, such as an upset stomach and fever. In some incidents there were no symptoms.

Check out this video alert from the Consumer Product Safety Commission ([CPSC](#)):

The [CPSC](#) recommends the following steps to prevent unintentional battery ingestion:

- Keep remotes and other electronics out of your child's reach if the battery compartments do not have a screw to secure them. Tape may be used to help secure the battery compartment.
- Keep button batteries out of your child's reach. Discard button batteries carefully.
- Do not allow children to play with button batteries.
- Never put button batteries in your mouth for any reason; they are slippery and easily swallowed accidentally.
- Always check medications before ingesting them. Adults have swallowed batteries mistaken for pills or tablets.
- Caution hearing aid users to keep hearing aids and batteries out of the reach of children.

