

Tiny batteries are a hazard for kids

According to the Washington State Department of Health, one thing parents, grandparents and caretakers should be aware of is the proliferation of tiny batteries into all kinds of household objects.

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According to the Washington State Department of Health, one thing parents, grandparents and caretakers should be aware of is the proliferation of tiny batteries into all kinds of household objects. For children, the tiny batteries pose both a choking hazard and can cause serious internal injuries.

“We are seeing more very young children swallowing small button batteries out of everything from musical holiday cards, wrist watches, and thermometers to small toys and remote controls,” said Dr. Kathy Sie, surgeon and director of the Childhood Communication Center at Seattle’s Children Hospital. “It’s much worse than when a child swallows a coin. When a battery gets stuck in a child’s throat, saliva triggers an electrical current that causes a chemical reaction within a few minutes of contact. Serious internal injury can happen in about two hours.”

According to the group Safe Kids USA, there were more than 3,400 swallowing cases involving these tiny batteries in 2010. There were 19 serious injuries, and some fatalities. Among the most serious cases, 85 percent involved children age 4 and younger.

The DOH gives these guidelines for anyone in charge of a child who swallows these small batteries:

- Go to an emergency room immediately. Tell emergency staff it might be a battery.
- If possible, give them the identification number from the battery’s package, or bring the package with you.

- Do not let the child eat or drink, and do not induce vomiting.

Hayes said those with children should not have easily breakable ornaments hanging low on Christmas trees. She also cautioned for people to always use caution when using candles, fireplaces and woodstoves over the holidays.

Safe Kids USA can be found at www.safekids.org.

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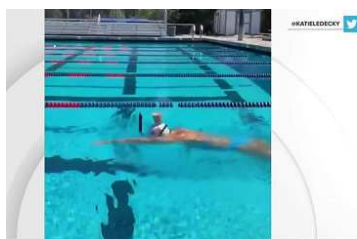
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