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## **Poison center issues warning after 4 children swallow button batteries**

By the Lincoln Journal Star  
Mar 7, 2012

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**I**n the past week, four children younger than 6 swallowed button batteries --- the coin-sized or smaller batteries found in remote controls, watches, hearing aids, flameless candles and talking/singing books and cards, etc.

While the recent calls to the Nebraska Regional Poison Control Center involved young children, the lithium batteries have been blamed for a sevenfold increase nationwide in the number of serious injuries and fatalities among children and senior citizens. In 2010, 3,499 accidental battery ingestions were reported in the United States.

The problem is that saliva immediately triggers an electrical current that causes a chemical reaction. Once swallowed, the batteries can get lodged in the throat or intestines, leading to severe chemical burns in as little as two hours.

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Among older adults, ingestion usually is attributed to mistaking the batteries for pills, or accidentally swallowing them while holding them in the mouth and switching batteries in hearing aids.

According to a recent study, more than 60 percent of battery swallowing incidents initially were misdiagnosed. Parents of young children often are unaware the child has swallowed a battery, which can make diagnosing the problem difficult, according to the poison center. Symptoms include stomach upset and fever.

The Poison Center recommends discarding button batteries carefully and keeping them and devices that use them out of the reach of children.

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For more information, call 800-222-1222.



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