

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL STUDY

'Button' batteries pose hazard for toddlers



ERIC ALBRECHT | DISPATCH

Morgan Sherrill, 22 months, cut her lip and chipped a tooth when she fell while drinking from a bottle.

By [Misti Crane](#)*The Columbus Dispatch* Monday May 14, 2012 6:02 AM

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For curious and increasingly mobile toddlers, potential dangers are everywhere.

Studies published in the medical journal *Pediatrics* today highlight the risks of ubiquitous household items: bottles, sippy cups and small batteries.

Researchers at Nationwide Children's Hospital led both studies, which looked at injuries included in a national emergency-department database to estimate the number of injuries related to the items.

Batteries, especially small "button" batteries, can kill or severely injure children who swallow them or put them in their ears, mouth or nose. In recent years, the number of injuries has escalated as more devices — everything from greeting cards to remote controls and hearing aids — are powered by easy-to-swallow button batteries, said Dr. Gary Smith, who led the study and directs the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Children's.

Making matters worse, more-powerful batteries are increasingly being used, Smith said.

An estimated 3,289 children end up in hospitals for battery-related injuries each year, according to the study.

Injuries often happen when a battery lodges in the child's esophagus, where it can burn through the tissue in just a couple of hours, Smith said. Parents who suspect that a child has swallowed a battery should go to the

