

Protect your child from the dangers of button batteries

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Each year, about 3,500 button batteries are reported swallowed by preschool children. Protect your child with these simple ideas.

Protect your child – put button batteries out of reach

Button batteries are any small round batteries that look like... buttons. You'll find them in all kinds of remote controls for cars, toys, electronics. Infants, Toddlers and Preschool children find their bright smooth round exterior very attractive and can't resist giving them a taste. Unfortunately, a taste usually leads to swallowing and an immediate hospital visit for diagnosis and removal. Take these precautions to protect your child.

1. Scour your home and car for anything that may contain these batteries; remote controls for electronics and cars, talking books or cards, toys, electronics, electronic candles, thermometers, calculators...
2. Remove all items from out of site and reach of children and keep them that way.
3. Secure all battery compartments with strong adhesive tape or a screw if possible.
4. Keep extra or loose batteries locked away in a secure out of reach container.

Signs of a swallowed battery can include these symptoms:

- suddenly has pain swallowing
- refuses to drink
- drools
- coughs
- vomits
- has nausea, diarrhea or stomach pain
- has chest pain
- has a fever

But the most obvious sign is an open battery compartment and a missing battery.

If your child swallows a battery the National Capital Poison Center recommends you:

1. Immediately call the 24-hour National Battery Ingestion Hotline at 202-625-3333 (call collect if necessary), or call your poison center at 1-800-222-1222.
2. If readily available, provide the battery identification number, found on the package or from a matching battery.

3. In most cases, an x-ray must be obtained right away to be sure that the battery has gone through the esophagus into the stomach. (If the battery remains in the esophagus, it must be removed immediately. Most batteries move on to the stomach and can be allowed to pass by themselves.) Based on the age of the patient and size of the battery, the National Battery Ingestion Hotline specialists can help you determine if an immediate x-ray is required.
4. Don't induce vomiting. Don't eat or drink until the x-ray shows the battery is beyond the esophagus.
5. Watch for fever, abdominal pain, vomiting, or blood in the stools. Report these symptoms immediately.
6. Check the stools until the battery has passed.
7. Your physician or the emergency room may call the National Button Battery Ingestion Hotline/National Capital Poison Center collect at 202-625-3333 for consultation about button batteries. Expert advice is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Watch this Button Battery Video

There will always be dangers from which we need to protect our children but by taking the necessary precautions we can minimize and often eliminate those dangers. Please make sure those button batteries are secure not only in your home but in any homes your child visits. Grandmas, grandpas, friends and neighbors need to do this too.