

Study Tracks Serious Health Risks of Button Batteries

By Holly Lebowitz Rossi



Children's emergency room visits related to swallowed batteries have risen an astounding 113 percent over the past 20 years, with a child under age 18 arriving at an ER every 90 minutes, a new study published in the journal *Pediatrics* has found. The study, which was conducted by Center for Injury Research and Policy of The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital, found that batteries, especially the small, flat "button batteries" that are found in so many electronic devices, can pose serious health risks, and can cause death if they become lodged in the esophagus.

Three-quarters of the hospital visits are for children ages 5 and under, with the greatest number involving 1-year-olds. Most of the batteries, when their origin is known, do not come from toys or children's games; they come from their parents' watches, calculators, and other electronics.

Research advise parents to prevent battery-related injuries in their families by taking the following steps:

- Tape the battery compartments of all household devices shut.
- Store batteries and products with batteries out of the reach of young children.
- Be aware of this potential danger when your child is visiting other homes.

Image: Button batteries, via Shutterstock.
