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Study: Button Batteries Responsible for Thousands of Child ER Visits

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By [Caitlin At Parenting.com \(/Blogs/caitlin-parentingcom\)](#)

A study published in the June issue of *Pediatrics* revealed a horrifying increase in the number of children ER visits as a result of either swallowing or inserting a button battery into their own mouth, ears or nose reports [HealthDay](#) (<http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=664687>).

Researchers tracked battery-related ER cases over 20 years and found that button batteries were not only responsible for almost 84 percent of the visits, but that amount had more than doubled to 2,785 visits in 2009 from 1,301 accidents in 1990.



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[Plus: Important Warning from the CPSC About Button Batteries](#) (<http://www.parenting.com/blogs/show-and-tell/melanie-parentingcom/cpsc-warns-rise-button-battery-related-injuries-deaths?cid=plusblog>)

These kinds of batteries are used in many household items ranging from remote controls to children's toys. Toddlers face the highest risk of incurring serious complications; the average age of incoming ER patients related to button battery ingestion is just below four years old.

[Plus: When to Avoid the Emergency Room](#) (<http://www.parenting.com/article/when-to-avoid-the-emergency-room?cid=plusblog>)

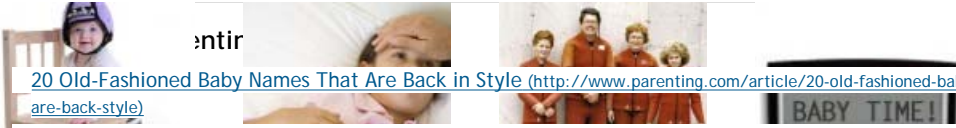
The study lead author, Dr. Gary A. Smith, director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus believes the alarming rise should be a call to action. He warns that while 92 percent of battery related cases are successfully treated, the rest face risk for severe internal damage. "When these increasingly powerful batteries stop in one spot in the esophagus they can create a little micro-current and burn a hole right through, causing very serious damage in less than two hours," he explained. "It can even burn into the aorta and cause a child to bleed to death."

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Smith urges parents to rush their child to the ER if they suspect an accidental ingestion or insertion. He further suggests that parents should not only keep the objects that contain these batteries out of reach, but also tape the compartments that hold the batteries shut. The National Battery Ingestion Hotline is available anytime at (202) 625-3333 (call collect if necessary), or call your poison center at (800) 222-1222, should you suspect your child has ingested a button battery.

Do you know if your household electronics have button batteries? Do you keep everyday items, like remotes, out of reach?

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