

Doctors Warn of Deadly Risk Among Young Children

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OKLAHOMA CITY - They're tiny, shiny and if swallowed can cause serious problems. Doctors are warning parents about something many of us have in our homes that can be deadly to children.



Small, coin-shaped button batteries are the problem. They can be found in many household electronics including toys, remote controls, and even greeting cards that play music.

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Bailey Lamb of Edmond is a busy mom working hard to keep her four kids safe.

"It's ongoing. It never ends," Lamb said.

Doctors say staying safe means making sure kids do not swallow the little batteries causing the big problems.

"I have two newborns, a 16 month old and a 3 year old, and that's all they do is put things in their mouth," Lamb said.

Experts say the batteries can get lodged in the esophagus. They can also erode and leak inside the child.

"When [the button batteries] come in contact with the fluids in the esophagus, it can cause the production of hydroxide that will cause a burning in the esophagus," Dr. Mary Ann Bauman, News 9 medical expert said. "[The burning] can cause a perforation. That's the most serious possibility."

Experts say it's a possibility that can lead to death. If a battery is eroding in the esophagus, there is only precious time to save the child's life.

"You may not even know they swallowed the battery and seem perfectly fine. Then a few hours later, they have a problem," Bauman said.

A study in the Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics reports the number of battery-related injuries has nearly doubled in the last decade, probably because of more household electronics being introduced to the market.

As for Lamb, she is not taking any chances. She locks extra batteries in the garage and makes sure batteries being used in toys stay there.

"If it's a battery we screw into a toy, I make sure that it's screwed in correctly. It's a work in progress," Lamb said.

The study says button batteries made up 84% of battery-related visits to the ER in the past 10 years.

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