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Button batteries BURN KIDS FROM INSIDE

Where's that dead CMOS battery you replaced last week?

By [Simon Sharwood, APAC Editor](#)

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The next time you replace a button battery, do take care to dispose of it thoughtfully lest your kids swallow it and end up subjecting their innards to a damaging electrical current.

So warns the journal *Pediatrics*, through a new study titled [Battery-Related Emergency Department Visits in the United States, 1990–2009](#) [1]. The study surveyed 100 US hospital emergency rooms and says, with 95% confidence, that 65,788 juvenile battery insertion incidents took place across the USA over the period studied.

The mean age for battery-related issues was 3.9 years and 60.2% of kids admitted were boys. The incidents fell into the following categories:

- Ingestion – 76.6 per cent
- Nasal cavity insertion – 10.2 per cent
- Mouth exposure – 7.5 per cent
- Ear canal insertion – 5.7 per cent

The incidents are no laughing matter, as a swallowed button cell can generate sufficient current to burn a hole in a child's oesophagus, from the inside, without the child displaying any obvious symptoms. Acid can also injure. Even batteries that appear depleted, inasmuch as they can no longer power electrical devices, can inflict these injuries.

Eight percent of battery-related incidents lead to surgery to remove the shiny little power source, which kids apparently swallow because they resemble sweets and look appealingly shiny.

The study's authors say such injuries are easy to prevent: securing the battery compartments of your gadgets and disposing of old batteries promptly should do the trick. ®

Links

1. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2012/05/09/peds.2011-0012>

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