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Button batteries, small batteries can cause big problems

SafetySmart Lilburn gives some advice on dangers and recycling for button batteries.

By [Margot Ashley](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 31, 2012



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Button batteries, small batteries can cause big problems

A recent article published by Reuters describes the damage caused when a child swallows button coin-sized batteries. These batteries are even found in remote controls, children's toys, hearing aids, even those cute singing greeting cards. These batteries are shiny, fairly small and inviting to children who are learning how to pick things up and who love to explore the world with their mouths.

Unfortunately, the batteries can also cause severe damage as they get stuck in the esophagus and can cause an electric current to flow through tissues, even if the battery is too "weak" to make the appliance work. Simply lodging in the esophagus, pressing on the tissue, will create problems if the battery is not removed in a timely manner. There are no immediate symptoms, but within two hours serious damage may be inflicted on the surrounding tissue.

In the twenty year span from 1990 to 2009, more than 65,000 injuries have been estimated due to children (under 18 years) swallowing these batteries. The rate has almost doubled in that time span due to the increasing use of electronic devices. Most incidents occur with children five years old or younger; most don't require serious intervention, and more than 90% go home from the emergency room with no lasting effects.

However, if the care giver suspects the child has swallowed a battery, it is very important to get a diagnostic x-ray to make sure.

The best treatment is prevention... be sure to tape the backs of in use electronic devices to keep inquisitive fingers from finding those batteries. Keep singing cards out of reach.

- Store all batteries out of reach or in a child-proof container.
- Tape used batteries securely to cardboard, or
- Place in a child proof container and recycle.

The following locations provide battery recycling:

[Earth911](#) [Battery Solutions](#) [Batteries Plus](#) [Battery Center](#) [Staples](#) Ace Hardware Advanced Auto

or go to [Recycler Finder](#) or [Battery Recyclers of America](#).

SafetySmart Lilburn is working to increase safety awareness in the 30047 zip code area.

Building the Safest Community in Georgia

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