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Hi, I'm Jean Campbell, creator of "Can Do" Street.

Welcome to the "Can Do" Blog for Parents and Teachers. This blog is a place for sharing information important to families and teachers of children 3-7 years. Please share with us on any topic appropriate to the needs and interests of families and teachers of children from pre-school through second grade.

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Watch Those Button Batteries

 June 8, 2012 | Posted by jean



Coin-sized batteries are the reason for seeing double the children's emergency room visits during the past twenty years.

In a study that is online and in the June issue of Pediatrics, researchers document serious complications, including deaths, occurring when children swallow "button batteries," found in items ranging from remote-control devices to children's toys.

The researchers looked at U.S. National Electronic Injury Surveillance System data concerning all battery-related visits to the ER among children up to age 18.

Four different types of accidental contact with button batteries were found: swallowing and insertion of a battery into the mouth, ear, or nose.

Researchers found that over the 20-year period such contacts translated into nearly 66,000 ER visits, with a dramatic increase over the final eight years. Button batteries accounted for 2,785 ER visits by kids younger than 18 in 2009, up from 1,301 in 1990.

Toddlers and others 5 years and younger faced the highest risk for accidental button-battery contact, with the average age of incoming ER patients just below 4 years.

Boys accounted for more of the ER visits (about 60 percent). Most cases (nearly 77 percent) were the result of swallowing batteries. Nose contact accounted for roughly 10 percent of cases, followed by mouth exposure (7.5 percent) and ear insertion (almost 6 percent).

The study report carries a message for parents stating that if they suspect that their child has swallowed a battery they need to get to the ER right away. To prevent such accidents, parents need to store and dispose of batteries while keeping them out of reach of their children. They need to tape all battery compartments shut.

The study report also carries a message for manufacturers stating that we need to have the industry make battery compartments inaccessible and

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child-resistant for all products, not just toys.

The study report concludes by advising parents to heed the general advice regarding choking, especially for those 5 years and younger. Children should never be within reach of any object that can fit through a choke tube, which is about the size of a cardboard tube of a toilet-paper roll. This is particularly the case with objects not normally considered dangerous, such as children's toys that have batteries and other small parts, and various objects found in the kitchen or bathroom.

(SOURCES: June 2012 *Pediatrics*)

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