



## Hidden dangers that batteries pose for children

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**IP** By **Independent Press**

As Safe Kids Coordinator for Union County, Susan Driscoll urges parents to keep battery-controlled devices out of sight and out of reach of small children and to lock away loose batteries. Mini remote controls, cards that sing, flameless tea lights and many more electronic devices have something in common: they are powered by coin lithium batteries, which children might mistake for a nickel. The batteries inside, if swallowed, can get stuck in a child's throat and cause serious injury, disability, and even death and it is preventable. Parents should also tell friends, family members, sitters and caregivers about this important issue.

When a battery gets stuck in a child's throat, the saliva triggers an electrical current which in turn triggers a chemical reaction that can severely burn the esophagus in as little as two hours. Once the burning reaction begins, it can continue even after the battery is removed. Sadly, repairing the damage is painful and can require feeding tubes, breathing tubes and multiple surgeries. The symptoms can be easily overlooked. Crying, vomiting, fever, wheezing, drooling, and fever may be mistaken for a respiratory infection.

The Union County Safe Kids Program at Children's Specialized Hospital reports that Safe Kids USA and Energizer Battery have partnered together to raise awareness of this issue and prevent injury to kids. Energizer is developing new packaging for coin-sized button batteries that is harder to open for children and includes improved safety warnings.

Children's Specialized Hospital is the preeminent provider of rehabilitation services for children with special needs. The hospital serves children affected by brain injury, spinal cord injury, premature birth, autism, developmental delays, and life-changing illnesses. Children's Specialized Hospital has eight sites in New Jersey and treats 18,000 children each year, making it the largest pediatric rehabilitation system of its kind in the nation. Services include outpatient services, acute rehabilitation, and long-term care through its sites in Bayonne, Clifton, Mountainside, Toms River, Fanwood, Hamilton, New Brunswick and Roselle Park as well as outreach programs in many communities.

Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation supports the programs and services of the hospital. The Foundation is ranked among the top six pediatric hospital foundations in the country. To help, or find more information, visit [childrens-specialized.org](http://childrens-specialized.org).

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