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10/09/2012

Small batteries are big risk for kids

By Ben Amirault

More than 40,000 children under the age of 13 were treated in the emergency department (ED) for battery-related injuries between 1997 and 2010, according to a study published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

The majority of those cases, 58%, die due to ingestion of "button" batteries; small disc batteries commonly found in remote controls and watches. Swallowing these batteries can lead to choking and severe burns that could ultimately lead to death. A study published in the *Archives of Otolaryngology—Head & Neck Surgery* detailed 10 cases of where surgeons



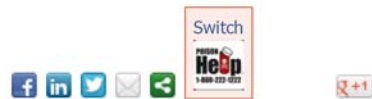
had to remove button batteries swollen by children. In seven of those cases, the children suffered severe esophageal damage. The study also outlines procedures to manage conditions that occur from battery ingestion.

According to the *Mortality Weekly Report*, Congress is crafting legislation to require child-resistant battery compartment closures on all consumer products that use button cell batteries. At least three of the deaths mentioned in the report involved devices not intended for children. The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention also believes increased public awareness could reduce exposure to, and injuries from, these batteries.

The best visualization of the damage button batteries can cause was tweeted by the *Emergency Medicine News*, earlier this afternoon. The photo was taken at the American College of Emergency Physicians Scientific Assembly and shows what a button battery does to a hotdog.

<https://twitter.com/EMNews/status/255753118694928385>

Just imagine what it would do to your throat!



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Founded in 2001, Barton Associates is a leading locum tenens staffing company serving physicians, nurse practitioners, and hospitals, medical practices and companies throughout the United States.



About Ben Amirault

Ben Amirault is a Senior Editor at Barton Associates' Peabody, MA headquarters. Ben writes content for the company website, blog, and other marketing materials. He joined Barton Associates in 2012 after spending four years as an editor at HCPro, a national healthcare publishing company. Ben received a B.A. in English, specializing in Journalism, from the University of New Hampshire in Durham, NH.

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