


Toy Batteries May Be Harmful To Children

 pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/2012/12/11/toy-batteries-may-be-harmful-to-children/

December 11, 2012



PITTSBURGH (KDKA) – The glow of the holidays grows all the brighter with toys that blink, light up, sing and shine, but that glow could be eclipsed by the danger that lurks inside.

“The last statistics that we have, for the nation, is in 2010, and there were 3,400 cases of children swallowing button batteries,” Chris Vitale, an injury prevention specialist at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh said. “A lot of times it ends up in surgery for the child.”

In the last decade-and-a-half there have been 14 battery-related deaths. These were children younger than four. In many cases, the parents don’t even realize what has happened.

“It’s the same thing as if they swallowed a chemical drain cleaner or oven cleaner. The difference is if they swallowed a drain cleaner, you would know immediately. And with a button battery, you don’t,” Vitale said.

These miniature power sources contain chemicals that strongly react to make electricity.

As these tiny and easily-swallowed button batteries pass through the digestive tract, they can cause burns, fever, abdominal pain, and bleeding.

“Inside the intestinal lining, there’s lots and lots of blood vessels,” Vitale said.

Unlike a coin that might take a day or two to pass, batteries aren’t as harmless.

“They don’t pass through fast enough without doing the damage,” she said. “They are everywhere. They’re in hearing aids, they’re in those great cards that sing, flashlights.”

If you have them in your house, keep them out of reach of children. If they are in toys, make sure the battery compartments can’t be opened easily. Many now require a screwdriver.

“If you have a book that makes noise and sings songs that they can tear the page, then that’s something they shouldn’t play with by themselves,” Vitale said.

Even if you’re remotely suspicious your child has swallowed a battery, get to an emergency room right away.

“There was a battery on the table and we can’t find it. There was a battery in this toy and it’s not there,” Vitale said about telltale signs.

Be sure to tell the doctors. They may not think to x-ray without this piece of information.

“I can’t think of another time of the year when we’re more distracted. This is the time when everyone wants to keep their eyes open,” Vitale said.

RELATED LINKS

[More Local News](#)

[More Health News](#)

[More Reports From Dr. Maria Simbra](#)