


Baby swallowed battery that corroded his spine causing his head to almost fall off

 dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3167692/How-baby-s-spine-corroded-causing-head-fall-swallowed-lithium-battery-hospital-diagnosed-shirt-button.html

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Baby's spine corroded causing his 'head to almost fall off' after he swallowed a lithium battery which the hospital assumed was a shirt button

- **Four-month-old baby boy Oscar developed breathing problems in 2010**
- **Dad, Colin, thinks his other toddler child may have fed him a button battery**
- **Family claims doctors mistook the circular battery for a shirt button**
- **When finally removed it is alleged there was a slow detection to discover three of the baby's vertebrae had suffered severe damage and collapsed**
- **He was in body cast for 8 months in Royal Children's Hospital, Brisbane**
- **The young boy can now walk but will have limited movement for life**
- **Far north Queensland family is pursuing legal action against Mossman Hospital and Cairns Base Hospital**

By Leesa Smith for Daily Mail Australia

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A distraught family is alleging that their child will have problems walking for the rest of his life after there were 'critical delays' at two hospitals to remove a button battery from the four-month old.

Precious little Oscar developed a cough and breathing problems in 2010 and his parents, from far north Queensland, claim that doctors from Cairns Base Hospital mistook the one centimetre battery that was lodged in his spine for a shirt button.

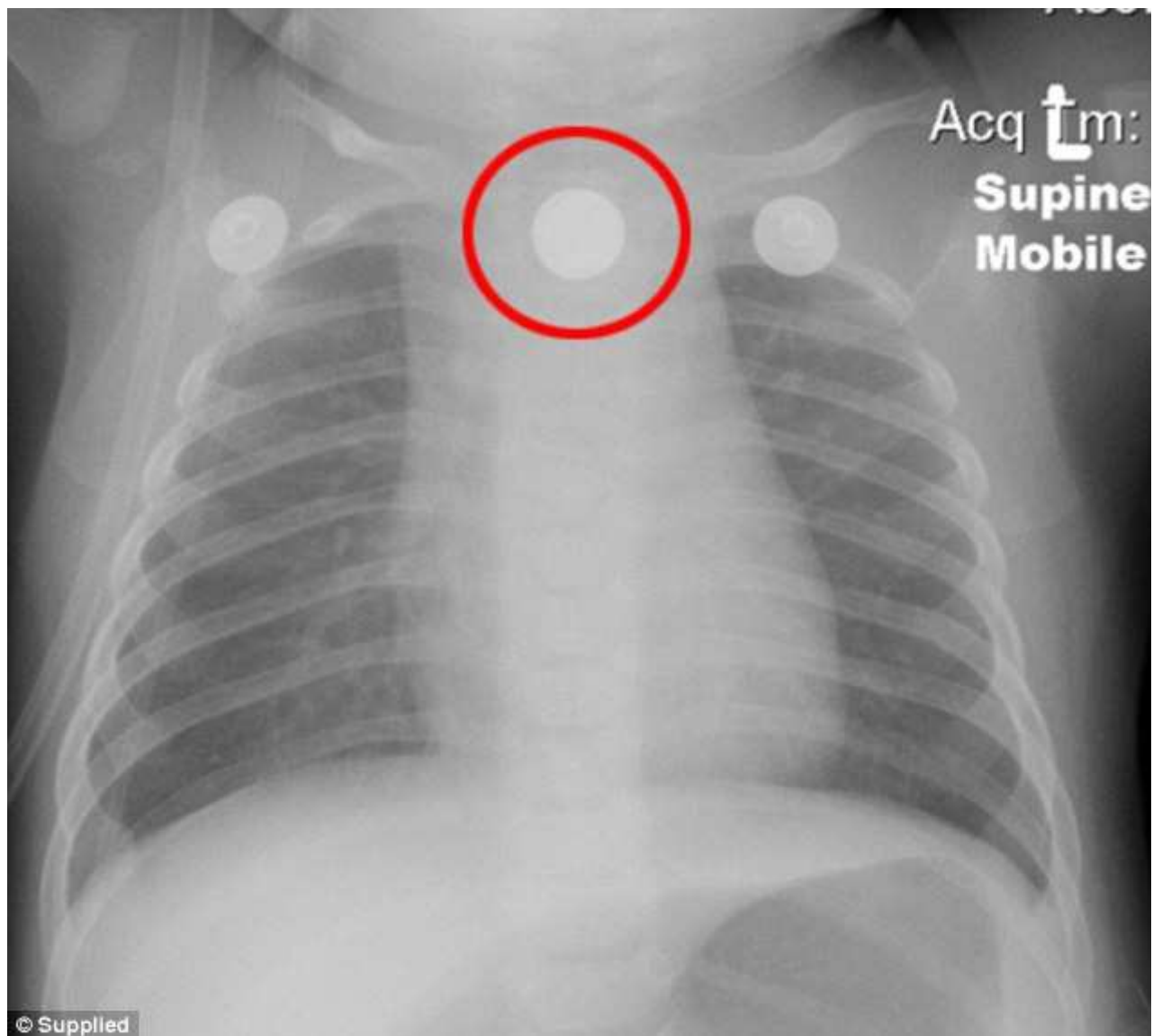
His parents believe the 14-hour delay in removing the small round battery resulted in the precious infant spending eight months in a full-body cast.

Now five years old, Oscar can walk but he will have severe restriction of movement for the rest of his life as he is unable to fully raise his head.

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Oscar developed breathing problems in 2010 and his parents, from far north Queensland, claim that doctors from Cairns Base Hospital mistook the button battery that was lodged in his spine for a shirt button



Oscar's father Colin took him to a GP on April 20 in 2010 where he was referred to Mossman Hospital for X-rays to determine why he was having difficulty breathing

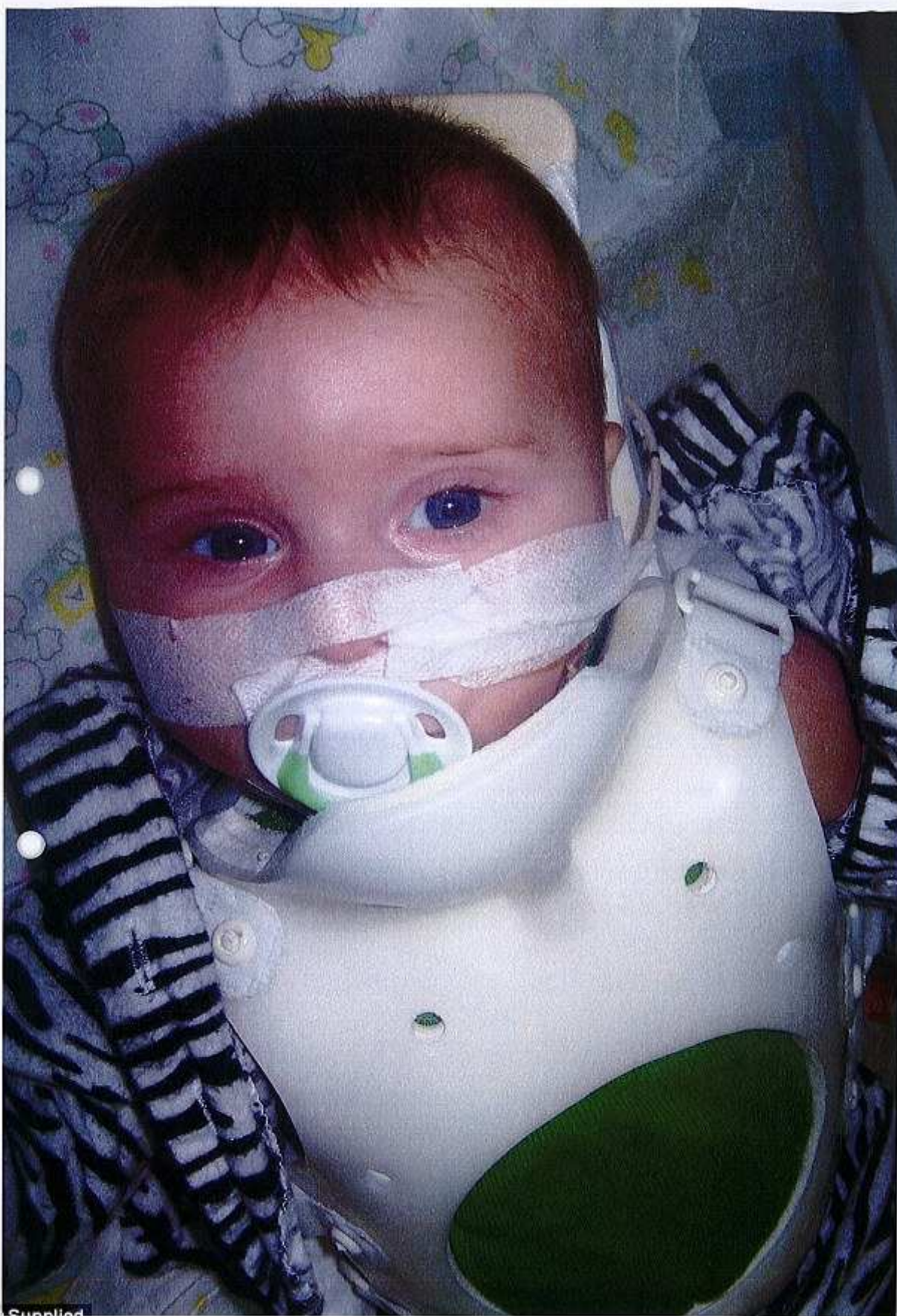
Oscar's father Colin took him to a GP on April 20 in 2010 where he was referred to Mossman Hospital for X-rays to determine why he was having difficulty breathing.

Oscar was sent to Cairns Hospital by ambulance after his condition worsened when the doctors looked at the X-ray and then asked Colin if his son had a shirt with buttons.

The little fella was taken home after the small round battery was finally removed more than 15 hours later, but returned to the hospital the next day when he began frothing at the mouth.

Four weeks later, Oscar returned to the hospital when Colin said his son was 'near death' and 'his head had almost fallen off' due to experiencing extensive destruction of 3 of his vertebra which severely weakened his spine.

Scans showed the battery had corroded Oscar's spine and the critically-ill child was placed in an induced coma and flown to Brisbane's Royal Children's Hospital where he was put a full-body cast for eight months.



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The little fella was taken home after the one-centimetre battery was finally removed more than 15 hours later, but returned to the hospital the next day when he began frothing at the mouth

His parents allege there was a crucial delay in the doctors detecting that three of the Oscar's vertebrae had suffered severe damage to the point that they had collapsed.

Colin, who thinks his other toddler may have fed Oscar the battery, says it was a miracle that his son survived and he will now always suffer from the ordeal.

Shine Lawyers are pursuing legal action on behalf of the family for failing to identify and remove the button battery in a timely manner to prevent the significant and permanent injuries the child has suffered.

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Head of the Medical Negligence department Bill King said the legal action is based on allegations that the hospitals failed to identify the button battery on a chest x-ray, mistaking its appearance for a button on the child's clothing.

'Because of the hospitals' failures, the child sustained severe spinal damage which will leave him permanently disabled for the rest of his life,' Mr King said.

'The battery reacted with the child's saliva and caused severe tissue damage including damage to his oesophagus and his cervical spine; fusing 3 of his discs and greatly restricting his range of motion.'



Scans showed the battery had corroded Oscar's spine and the critically-ill child was placed in an induced coma and flown to Brisbane's Royal Children's Hospital where he was put a full-body cast for eight months



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Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service acting chief executive Caroline Wagner said it wasn't appropriate to provide comment as the case was an ongoing.

'Cairns Hospital regularly reviews the way we operate to ensure we are providing the most appropriate care to our community,' Ms Wagner said.

This comes as an inquest earlier this month into the death of four-year-old Summer Steer on the Sunshine Coast in 2013 heard that the young girl was taken to hospital three times before a button battery was found lodged in her oesophagus but she died from cardiac failure two hours later.

'Medical professionals need to be aware of the serious legal repercussions that can result should they fail to detect and respond to the ingestion of such dangerous foreign materials,' Mr King said.