

Child from St. Johns County undergoes 18 procedures after swallowing battery

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By: Action News Jax

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A couple from St. Johns County is warning other parents to keep small batteries out of reach of young children.

They said their 19-month-old nearly died from swallowing a lithium button battery earlier this year.

"It was really hard at first. I had a lot of guilt," said Courtney Thorne, the child's mother.

Thorne said that in March her child picked up a remote control before Thorne could take it away. The remote somehow opened and one of the batteries fell into the girl's mouth and then down into her throat.

Thorne said she called 911 right away and her daughter was rushed to Wolfson Children's Hospital. "We had a doctor come in, and he said it was like a coin and it would be okay," Thorne said. "(But) when the surgeon came in and said she needed to go into emergency surgery, it hit me."

After Action News Jax called the hospital several times, Wolfson Children's Hospital released the following statement:

“Small batteries can be very dangerous to children. Wolfson Children’s Hospital takes all matters related to care very seriously, and at this time. We would simply like to express our heartfelt hope that every child remain safe, healthy and injury-free this holiday season.”

According to National Capital Poison Center, batteries must be removed from the esophagus within two hours. Otherwise, it can cause severe burns.

The child's parents said it took 5 1/2 hours for doctors to remove the battery. Since then, the child has underwent 18 procedures and only eats pureed foods.

Lithium batteries can be more accessible during the holidays, from toys to holiday cards, and Thorne said parents need to be careful.

"We don't want this to happen to any other family and for any other child to go through this," she said. "The lack of awareness on how dangerous these batteries are is truly terrifying."

According to the National Safety Council, more than 3,500 people of all ages swallow button batteries every year in the U.S.

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