

# Toddler bled to death after swallowing button battery which burned his organs

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Sam Corbishley Tuesday 26 Jan 2021 2:26 pm

Johnathan Huff swallowed a button battery from a remote control (Picture: Kennedy News and Media)

A toddler bled to death after swallowing a tiny button battery from a remote control which burned through his organs.

Johnathan Huff, aged 23 months, was initially suspected to have had a viral infection that was causing occasional nosebleeds and a raised temperature.

But after two trips to the doctors he started vomiting vast amounts of blood, appeared to be fitting and then fell unconscious at home.

His dad AJ, 34, who is a paramedic, started performing chest compressions while mum Jackie, 35, gave him the kiss of life, but he tragically died in hospital.

An autopsy report later revealed a button battery in Johnathan's intestines which Jackie believes came from a key-finder remote they kept on a countertop.

Jackie, from Greensboro, North Carolina, said: 'I just want to make every parent aware of the dangers and make people realise just how many devices have these batteries all over your home.'

'In this case, the back of the remote slides right off, it wasn't screwed down.

'After this happened we started doing research into it, something as simple as putting duct tape over the back of the remote could have stopped this.

'Duct tape is hard for adults to get off, a two-year-old is not going to be able to open it.

'I can't bring back Johnathan, but if there is anything I can do to make more parents search through their homes, then that's something.'



The key-finder remote which Johnathan's parents believe he took the battery from  
(Picture: Kennedy News)

The mum-of-two described how the toddler must have swallowed the battery at some point in the 20 minutes it took to get them ready for day care on December 16.

Johnathan appeared fine up until lunchtime, but teachers noticed he had a nosebleed before he began vomiting blood at around midday.

Paramedics rushed to the scene and, after examining the toddler, concluded some of the blood from his nose had trickled down his throat, irritated his stomach and caused the vomiting.

They advised he visit a paediatrician to be checked over.

Jackie, a physician assistant, said: 'It's a reasonable explanation and it's exactly what I would say as a medical professional, 100%.'

The paediatrician also agreed but told them to come back if anything changed.

Johnathan appeared fine on the Thursday, but his temperature rocketed later that evening and he was taken back to see the paediatrician again the following day.

He took a coronavirus test and underwent a chest x-ray to rule out pneumonia before being sent home again in the belief he was suffering from a common infection called bronchiolitis.





(From left to right) AJ, Michael, aged four, Jackie and Johnathan Huff (Picture: Kennedy News)

Jackie said: 'When the doctor called me and said to take it easy and keep him hydrated through the weekend, sounded good to me.'

'There was no battery on that x-ray picture. The only explanation is that the battery must have already travelled lower than the chest at this point.'

Jackie and AJ spent Saturday watching over Johnathan as he watched his favourite TV show and enjoyed some snacks.

He still seemed fine when he fell asleep that night but woke the following morning with a raised temperature and coughed up some blood.

AJ was supposed to go into work on Sunday and do a 24-hour shift but decided to stay home.

Jackie said: 'We put him down to nap but at around 9am I heard him cough really hard on the monitor.'

'I picked him up, then he coughed again and vomited bright red blood all down my shirt. It was a lot, it was very shocking.

'I pulled my phone out to get directions to the nearest hospital and while AJ was holding Johnathan I glanced over at him and he was posturing like he was having a seizure.

'AJ said he could feel him go limp in his arms. His hands drew up, his lips turned blue and he was unconscious.'



Johnathan Huff was just 23 months old when he tragically died (Picture: Kennedy News)

She added: 'Our professional instincts kicked in, I kept his airway open and checked his pulse – just doing a normal assessment head to toe.

'I then handed him over to AJ and that was when he said Johnathan's pulse slowly started going down.

'He could feel his heart beating and then it was beating slower and slower and his heart stopped.'

She described how AJ 'went into full-blown paramedic mode' and began chest compressions while she blew rescue breaths.

Ambulance staff then carried out emergency medical care before rushing him and AJ to Moses H. Cone Hospital in North Carolina.

Jackie was driven to the hospital by a sheriff but her son had already died by the time she arrived.

She said: 'I ran into the hospital and AJ was standing there with a chaplain from the hospital.

'The ER doctor immediately walked over to me and started the speech, the speech that I've given people so many times.

'I knew as soon as he started talking, from the tone of his voice and him saying "we've done everything that we can", I knew that he was dead. I just broke down.'

The battery was found in Johnathan's intestines and his cause of death was recorded as haemorrhage into the gastrointestinal tract and oesophageal and aortic wall erosion.

His devastated parents laid him to rest in Kentucky on December 27, a week after he tragically passed away.

Due to his love of fire trucks, the community rallied together and arranged for four fire trucks and two ambulances to escort him on his final journey from the funeral home to the cemetery.