

Hidden Hazard: South Florida mother warns about dangers of button batteries after daughter swallows one

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(WSVN) - They are used to power hearing aids, key fobs and many other small electronics, and if your child gets a hold of one and swallows it, it can turn into a matter of life or death. In tonight's special report, Kevin Ozebek looks at the "Hidden Hazard" of button batteries.

Delany is your typical 3-year-old.

Ysora Waugh, mother: "She's just a joy."

She loves her parents, can play with her brother for hours and is shy around strangers.

Kevin Ozebek: "Delany, do you have a favorite cartoon?"

But the day after Christmas, Ysora Waugh says her usually vibrant little girl started acting strangely.

Ysora Waugh: "All of the sudden, she started crying. I had turned my back just for a second, and when she started crying, I ran to her. She was saying 'ouchy' and pointing to her throat."

Her big brother Keoni was home with his mom and sister and tried to help.

Keoni Waugh, brother: "I was basically just playing my Xbox, and then I just heard her saying, 'Ouchy, ouchy, ouchy,' so I ran over. I tried getting her a candy cane, an ice cream."

Kevin Ozebek: "She didn't want it?"

Keoni Waugh: "Yeah."

Delany started drooling, so Ysora called 911.

Ysora Waugh: "I knew at that point something had to be lodged in there to be causing that."

Ysora had paramedics rush Delany to an ER.

Kevin Ozebek: "If you did not take her to the hospital that day, what would have happened to her, do you think?"

Ysora Waugh: "She probably wouldn't be with us today."

Doctors took this X-ray and the source of Delany's pain became clear.

She had swallowed a small button battery.

Ysora Waugh: “I was in shock. We don’t own watches like that. We don’t have those kind of batteries around that I knew of.”

In just the four hours from the time Delany ingested the battery to when doctors were able to remove it, the battery began corroding.

Delany’s doctor is Neil Tucker of Broward Health.

Dr. Neil Tucker, Broward Health: “The battery is lodged between the walls of the esophagus, and it creates a current. Then the battery will start to corrode, and its contents will come out. It’s something that can become a life or death situation.”

If you suspect your child has swallowed a button battery, it’s recommended you give him or her honey while en route to the ER if they are over the age of 1.

It may coat the battery and prevent corrosion, but Dr. Tucker says this is his best advice for parents.

Dr. Neil Tucker: “They just need to safety proof their homes and make sure that these things are not sitting around.”

Ysora and her husband found out the battery Delany swallowed came from a remote that controls a ring light.

Kevin Ozebek: “Did you even know you had a button battery in any device in your home?”

Chris Waugh, father: “No.”

I didn’t think I had any of these button batteries in my home either, until I was cooking one day and noticed the battery slot in the back of my kitchen scale. There is no screw holding the cover in place, so there is very easy access to the battery.

Ysora Waugh: “Look over all your toys, all of your remotes. Look for any loose batteries. Make sure the covering on the battery part is something that is safe. It either has a screw, or if it doesn’t, place a piece of tape on it, or just get rid of it altogether, because I will never allow one of those batteries back in my house.”

Good advice from a mother whose child is just one of the nearly 2,500 kids under the age of 7 who swallowed a button battery last year, and a mother who now knows first hand the hidden hazard they pose.

Some battery makers like Duracell are putting bitter-tasting coatings on their button batteries, so if a child does put it in their mouth, they’re more likely to spit it out.

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