

# Mum's warning as girl, 2, dies after swallowing battery from remote control

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A HEARTBROKEN mum has issued a warning to parents after her two-year-old daughter died from swallowing a remote control battery.

Harper-Lee Fanthorpe tragically passed away just hours later when acid from the button battery burned through her food pipe and into a major artery.



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Harper-Lee Fanthorpe, 2, tragically died after swallowing a button battery on May 23



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Her heartbroken mother Stacey Nicklin wants to raise awareness of the dangers of batteriesCredit: BBC

Her grief-stricken mum Stacey Nicklin broke down in tears as she recalled her final words were: "Mummy, I need you".

The mum, of Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, told BBC Breakfast she didn't realise the dangers and is desperate to raise awareness to other parents after the tot's death on May 23.

She was unaware her little girl had swallowed anything before later finding a remote control with a missing button battery in her bedroom.

"It's about awareness. If I can save one child or a hundred, then I've promised my baby I've done what I've done," she said.

"They need to be more secure. Parents need to check. Just check, check, check."

The youngster was being looked after by her older sister, Jamie-Leigh Nicklin-Hulme, who described the moment her head "suddenly went backward" before she began vomiting blood.

"She wasn't responding. She just went very wheezy, her eyes just closed and she couldn't talk back to me, like she wasn't there," she said.

"It doesn't feel real, it feels like a dream."

Harper-Lee was rushed to Royal Stoke University Hospital where she had a two litre blood transfusion after losing half the blood in her tiny body, before heading for surgery.



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The tot began vomiting blood when her older sister Jamie-Leigh was looking after herCredit: BBC

## 'THE HOUSE IS JUST SO QUIET'

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"I told her I loved her and that's the last time I saw her.

"Halfway through her surgery, the surgeon come out and told me that they think she's swallowed a button battery," Stacey explained.

As well as remote controls, the small circular batteries are used in a huge variety of products, including car keys, watches, toys and kitchen scales.

Harper-Lee suffered a cardiac arrhythmia during surgery and died. An inquest into her death ruled that it was accidental.

North Staffordshire senior coroner Andrew Barkley said: "There is a very clear concern about this in public health. It has affected lots of children."

The UK Government launched a button battery safety campaign at the beginning of this year.



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Stacey later found the remote control with a missing button batteryCredit: BBC

The devastated mother then told how she had found the remote in her daughter's bedroom missing the button battery, that "wasn't even secure, it just slid out."

"We didn't know the dangers of it. Toys - they're in everything - children's books.

"I had to go and tell my girls that their baby sister had passed away," Stacey sobbed.

"She's left a very big hole. These five weeks have been absolute torture, I feel so lost. The house is just so quiet."

Consultant paediatrician at the Royal Stoke University Hospital, Anna Pigott, said there have been a number of other cases of deaths or very serious injuries from children swallowing button batteries in the UK.

Parents should be aware of symptoms such as drooling and coughing up blood as well as a child pointing to their throat or tummy, she said.

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board issued a warning to parents in wake of the tot's death, encouraging parents to "trust your instincts and act fast even if there are no symptoms."

Stoke-on-Trent City Council said it was a "tragic accident" and pledged to raise awareness of the dangers of button batteries.