


# Doctors Issue Warning About Button Batteries

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**CBSN Chicago** *Watch Now*

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*If swallowed, a button battery can completely erode the esophagus in less than five hours.  
(Credit: CBS)*

**CHICAGO (WBBM)** — Two children in the last three weeks have been treated at Children’s Memorial Hospital after they ingested button batteries.

One child was hospitalized after the battery perforated the esophagus.

Pediatric resident Dr. Karen Maul of Children’s says swallowing batteries can be the equivalent of ingesting bleach.

“Button batteries aren’t like coins when they are swallowed in that they produce an electric current and that generates hydroxide ions so if you can imagine swallowing bleach, it’s kind of similar.”

Studies show that small, coin sized batteries found in products such as remote controls, flashlights and greeting cards are now landing in the hands of children and with some devastating consequences. Dr. Maul says this injury is 100 percent preventable.

A study by the National Capital Poison Center found that battery related incidents resulting in severe injury and fatality have increased sevenfold since 1985. Data shows that there used to be a dozen cases a year and that has jumped to an average of 100 cases per year on a review of 56,000 cases.

If the battery is stuck in the esophagus there is only a two hour time window to remove before a chemical burn causes significant tissue damage.

Doctors are advising parents to take an inventory of their home. Maul says look through the different products and determine if you have any button batteries and treat them like magnets or poisons. Not all products are child proofed. Maul says they are working on legislation to change that.