

# Danger of button batteries worries parents

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WASHINGTON - A new report out Monday morning is highlighting the hidden dangers of button batteries that are found in just about every household.

Max Sadauskas is a healthy, happy 2-year-old. But when he was 15-months-old, there was an episode that still haunts his parents Susan and Mark.

Max suddenly began vomiting but had no other symptoms. They rushed him to a hospital where X-rays revealed the cause: Max had swallowed a button battery, and it lodged in his esophagus. The battery had to be surgically removed.

According to a study published Monday morning in the journal *Pediatrics*, every three hours - a child younger than 18 goes to an emergency room for a battery-

related problem. The number of those visits doubled in 20 years.

The researchers say with new, more powerful batteries being sold, the issue is no longer poisoning from the lithium inside.

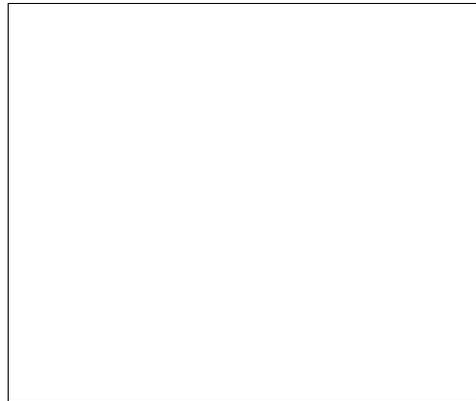
Doctors say a 3V battery can burn a hole in the esophagus in less than two hours, resulting in serious injury, possibly including permanent voice damage, or even death. In a busy emergency room, a doctor could mistake a dangerous battery for a harmless coin.

The researchers say parents can secure the devices' battery compartments.

Max's mom went to great lengths to childproof the house such as locks on kitchen cabinets and covers on electric outlets.

The electronics industry has just adopted new standards to childproof devices, using a screw to secure the battery compartment, or requiring to actions to

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open them like a drug bottle. For old devices, doctors recommend taping them shut.

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