



Rise in use of 'button batteries' coincides with doubling of ER cases involving children

Published: Monday, May 14, 2012, 2:29 PM Updated: Monday, May 14, 2012, 2:29 PM



Amber Acker, al.com

By

A recent study shows the number of battery-related ER visits has doubled in the past two decades, giving parents reason to be cautious especially when allowing their children to play with toys and electronics that contain small button-type batteries.

The study was published in the journal **Pediatrics** and shows that in 2009, 5,525 emergency room visits were caused by children swallowing batteries or sticking them in their nose or ears, **according to the LA Times**.

USA Today reports the increase corresponds with the debut of the 3-volt, 20-millimeter lithium battery button battery, which can now be found in a large number of electronic toys, watches and other items.

84 percent of the cases in the study involved button batteries, which are disc-shaped, coin-size batteries, **reports CBS News**. Though choking is a risk, button batteries can also burn through a child's esophagus. This can cause breathing problems, infections or internal bleeding that could ultimately lead to death.

The batteries often come in items you wouldn't expect. The majority of the ER cases involved batteries from hearing aids, watches, remote controls and flashlights, **MSNBC reports**.

Doctors say the best way to prevent children from getting a hold of the batteries is to be aware of which items in your home contain them, **notes ABC News**. If the batteries are held in a compartment that a child could open, try taping it closed. Or treat items with small batteries like medicine and keep them stored in an area not easily within a child's reach.

© 2012 al.com. All rights reserved.



84 percent of the cases involved in the study completed by researchers at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, were 'button batteries,' the coin-size, disc-shaped batteries used in many toys today. (Nationwide Children's Hospital)