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Button batteries blamed on increase number of ER visits

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BOARDMAN, Ohio - Button batteries are sending more kids to the emergency room. A recent study showed that the number of visits has doubled in the last 20 years.

"Everyone is trying to make different things slim and smaller. And with that, they have to have smaller batteries. The backs, sometimes, are easy to come off and children playing with things may take the back off and ingest the battery and that can be detrimental," said Akron Children's Hospital Injury Prevention

Specialist Gia Ramsey

According to a study in Pediatrics magazine, over the last 20 years there have been more than 66,000 ER visits by kids under the age of 18 because of button batteries.

Ramsey says it can be tough to know if your children have gotten a hold of one because if you didn't see them swallow it you might only notice flu-like symptoms.

"Some symptoms could be choking. They could be coughing. They could say that their chest hurts," Ramsey said. "Different things like that. You get any of these symptoms coming through with your children it's very important to go to the emergency room and get an x-ray right away."

While most children are able to pass the batteries, some do get lodged especially the ones that are the size of nickels.

Ramsey says once the batteries mix with saliva, it can take as little as two hours for them to break down and start burning the esophagus.

To prevent injury and even death, Ramsey suggests making sure you know which devices in your home have button batteries, double check to make sure the backs are secure and be sure to lock away your spare button batteries.



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