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## More children are swallowing batteries, especially the button coin-sized ones

By **KAREN CRUMMY** |  No Comments



Matthew Staver, Bloomberg

Swallowing batteries is not good for children.

While this may not be a shocking revelation, the serious health repercussions may be.

Button batteries — the thin, coin-sized batteries found in everything from watches to children's toys — can burn a hole in the esophagus in less than two hours. It can also burn into the aorta and cause a child to bleed to death, said Dr. Gary Smith, director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio.

The number of children rushed to the ER has doubled over the past two decades, [according to a new study in the June issue of Pediatrics](#) [1].

"The increase we're seeing is a call to action," said Smith, the study's lead author. "I've treated many of these children, and when it happens it's absolutely horrifying."

Researchers found more than 5,500 battery-related emergency department visits in 2009 by people under age 18. Children ages 5 and under accounted for more than three quarters of them. More than 65,000 visits involving children who ingested batteries — mostly button batteries — occurred over the past two decades.

"If a parent thinks that their young child has swallowed a button battery, they need to go immediately to the emergency department to have an X-ray done. They need to tell them that they think it's a button battery because the clock is ticking," Smith said.

The study in the journal *Pediatrics* was supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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[1] according to a new study in the June issue of *Pediatrics*: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/>

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