


CDC warns parents to beware button batteries

 thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2012/08/30/cdc-warns-parents-to-beware-button-batteries/



They are used to power everything from flashlights to remote controls. So called "button batteries," which are the size of coins (and sometimes smaller), have grown in popularity over the past few decades. Now, the Centers for Disease Control is warning parents to keep them away from children.

According to this week's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, approximately 40,400 children aged 12 and younger were treated in emergency rooms for battery-related injuries between 1997 and 2010

But here's the bigger concern: 14 children, all of them under the age of 4, died after swallowing batteries. Twelve of the 14 deaths involved button batteries. In most cases, the batteries got stuck in the esophagus. Experts say when that happens, or if the batteries make it down to the intestine, they can emit hydroxide which can cause chemical burns.

So what can parents do to keep their kids safe? The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission makes the following recommendations:

- Get rid of button batteries carefully.
- Don't allow children to play with them and keep them out of your child's reach.

- Ask people who use hearing aids to keep the hearing aids and batteries out of the reach of children.
- If an electronic device's battery compartment doesn't have a screw to secure it, use tape to help secure it.

The CPSC also is calling on the battery and electronics industry to develop warning labels and other ways to protect children. In 2011, Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-West Virginia) introduced a bill that would help protect kids from swallowing button batteries. That bill is still awaiting committee action.

About this blog

Get a behind-the-scenes look at the latest stories from CNN Chief Medical Correspondent, Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Senior Medical Correspondent Elizabeth Cohen and the CNN Medical Unit producers. They'll share news and views on health and medical trends - info that will help you take better care of yourself and the people you love.