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## Rise In Battery Injuries Lead To Serious Health Concern

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**Connie K. Ho** for redOrbit.com – Your Universe Online

In a recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), researchers found that injuries to children due to small batteries have increased in the last few years and ingestion can cause serious health issues.

In particular, the report stated that there is growing concern over the ingestion of batteries because they can become stuck in the esophagus and cause serious problems or even death. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) staff looked at data from 1997 to 2019 from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS). They also looked at databases from 1995 to 2010, such as the Injury and Potential Injury Incident File, the Death Certificate Database (DTHS), and the In-Depth Investigation File (INDP). The results were published in the most recent [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#).

“There is [growing attention to this hazard](#) and an increase in the number of fatalities,” Scott Wolfson, director of communications for CPSC, told ABC News. “Today, more of these small batteries are being used in products such as remote controls, greeting cards, flashlights and CPSC is seeing children getting access to those batteries.”

The researchers found that, from 1997 to 2010, around 40,400 children under the age of 13 were sent to hospital emergency departments for treatment related to injuries from batteries. Almost 10 percent of the injured needed to be hospitalized for treatment. From 1995 to 2010, a total of fourteen fatal injuries were found for children between the ages of seven months to three years. My Healthy News Daily reported that [children can suffer injuries from these small batteries](#) like chemical burns, tears in the esophagus, and hemorrhaging.

As well, there was an increasing trend in battery-related injuries and there was a 2.5 time increase in cases from 1998 (1,900 case) to 2010 (4,800 cases). Battery type was reported for 69 percent of cases, and of those, button batteries were implicated in 58 percent. Eleven percent of injuries were from cylindrical batteries.

[According to NPR](#), button-type batteries have been used in things like the TV remote, singing greeting cards, and children’s toys. The scientists also found that there were a few cases of misdiagnosis and delayed treatment, leading to death in some instances.

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Based on their findings, the CPSC is encouraging the electronics industry and battery manufacturers to design warnings and industry standards to limit serious injuries and deaths due to button batteries. They also believe that public health experts and health-care providers can educate parents to leave button batteries and products that have button batteries in a place that is not accessible to children. Parents of children who ingest batteries need to pursue medical attention immediately as delays in diagnosis and treatment can possibly cause serious problems or death.

"That's what's so scary about these, you can get damage so quickly," commented [Alison Tothy](#), director of pediatric emergency medicine at the University of Chicago, in the ABC News article. "But how many parents bring their kids to the emergency department for a little belly pain, but 8, 12, 14 hours later they are still having belly pain and starting to vomit...and there is even more damage that has been done because battery has sat there for 24 hours."

A study published in [Pediatrics](#) in May also reported similar results. Between 1990 and 2009, there was an increase in the number of children who had emergency department visits due to ingesting batteries. Over 65,000 emergency department visits involved kids age 18 and under.

"We live in a world designed by adults for the convenience of adults, and the safety of children is often not considered," stated study author [Gary Smith](#), director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital, in the ABC News article.

There is also legislation currently underway to address the possible risk of ingesting button cell batteries unintentionally. Legislators are proposing that child-resistant battery compartment closures be included in all consumer products that use button cell batteries, warnings be created on the dangers of ingesting button cell batteries, and child-resistant packing for batteries.

The authors noted that there were a few limitations in the report. One, the NEISS case narratives were brief and didn't include detailed information unless there was a follow-up investigation. Two, the report didn't include incidents that went untreated or cases that were treated in doctors' offices or outpatient facilities.

**Source:** Connie K. Ho for redOrbit.com – Your Universe Online

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