

40K kids treated for swallowed batteries

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ATLANTA, Aug. 31 (UPI) -- ATLANTA, Aug. 31 (UPI) -- From 1997 to 2010, an estimated 40,400 U.S. children age 13 or younger were treated in a hospital for battery-related injuries, health officials say.

A report published in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report said 72 percent of these were among children age 4 and younger, and 14 battery-related fatalities were identified of which 12 of the 14 deaths involved button batteries.

"Given the rising use of button batteries, healthcare providers should be aware of the injuries associated with ingestion, public health and healthcare providers should counsel caregivers on the dangers of exposures and parents should keep products containing button batteries such as remote controls away from young children unless the batteries are secured safely," the report said.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission analyzed 1997 to 2010 data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System.

In four of the fatal cases, the patients were misdiagnosed and released, delaying treatment.

For example, a 2-year-old boy was treated and released from a hospital emergency department for coughing/choking episodes and abdominal pain. Eight days later, he was brought back to the hospital unconscious and in respiratory distress. He subsequently died from bleeding associated with a perforated esophagus and aorta caused by ingestion of a round, flat battery from a remote control.

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