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Protect Your Children From Swallowing Small Batteries

By [Dr. James Palermo](#) // September 3, 2012 // [No comments](#)

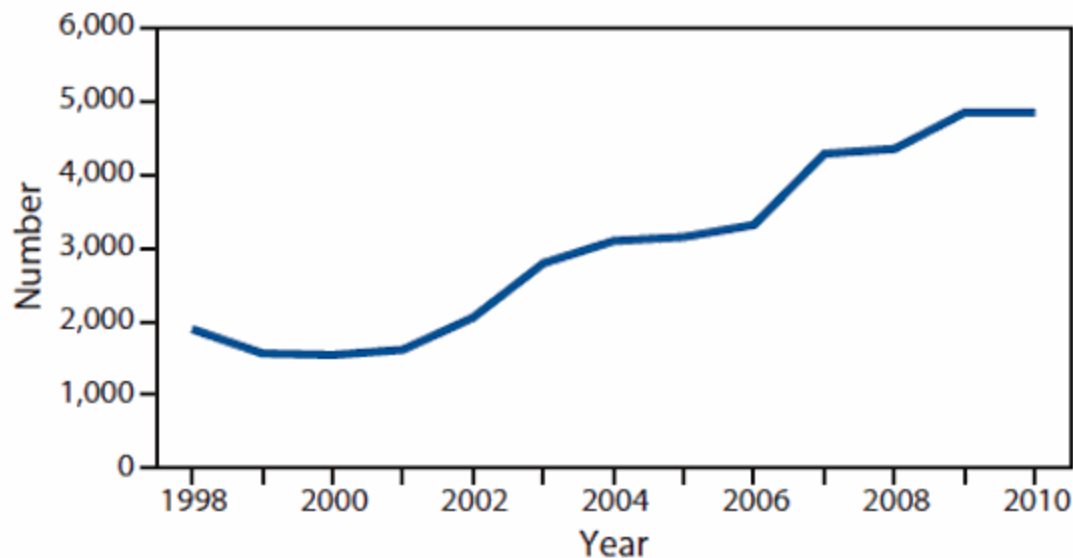


HEALTHCARE ALERT

(VIDEO by **ClevelandClinic**)

BREVARD COUNTY,FLORIDA–According to a [report](#) based on an analysis by the [Consumer Product Safety Commission's](#) (CPSC) National Electronic Injury Surveillance System and published in the August 31 issue of the [Center for Disease Control's](#) (CDC) *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, the number of children injured by swallowing batteries, especially the small, sleek, coin-size round “button batteries” used in such things as remote controls and other electronic devices and toys, rose significantly over a 13-year period.

Lead researcher, Jacqueline Ferrante, PhD, and colleagues at the CPSC and the CDC estimate 40,400 children under age 13 were treated in hospital emergency rooms for battery-related injuries from 1997 to 2010, with the yearly rate more than doubling over that time, from 1,900 in 1998 to 4,800 in 2010.



Estimated annual number of emergency department–treated battery injuries involving children under aged 13 years. Problems are on the rise, as this graph shows, and reflects the safety risk posed by the ready supply of batteries in the ever increasing use of electronic devices and toys. (Image by the CDC-Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), United States, 1998–2010)

The researchers also found that nearly 72% of the battery-swallowing incidents involved children younger than age five, with the battery type reported in 69% of the cases, of which 58% involved button batteries and 11% cylindrical batteries.



"Button batteries" used in an ever-increasing number of electronic devices pose a significant risk to children.

Symptoms are relatively nonspecific, the researchers noted, making the diagnosis difficult, especially if no one has seen the child swallow the battery. Most children who ingest a battery are treated and released or examined and released without treatment. However, a swallowed button battery can cause choking, severe burns and, sometimes, death.

Approximately one in ten children required hospital admission, and researchers found, that there were 14 battery-related deaths, 12 from button-type battery ingestion, from 1995 through 2010, 13 of them between

2002 and 2010, as well as three more fatal cases reported after the data was compiled, two in 2011 and one in 2012, all involving button batteries.

It is imperative to keep remotes, flashlights, light-up jewelry and other battery-powered devices and toys away from young children, unless the battery compartment is absolutely secure. For more information and to test your knowledge related to this relatively common house-hold risk, take the the [CPSC's safety quiz](#).

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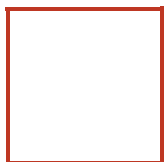
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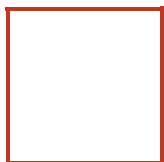


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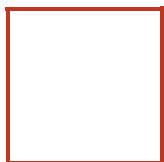


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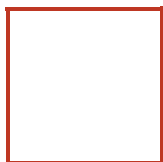
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DR. JIM PALERMO, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Dr. Palermo, a 28-year resident of Brevard County, touched the lives of countless people during his 22-year practice of general, vascular and non-cardiac thoracic surgery. In 2002 he transitioned from clinical practice and accepted a position as full-time chief medical officer and vice president of quality management of Health First, which afforded him the opportunity to serve the global community in a more meaningful way. An accomplished author and sought-after expert in the healthcare industry, Dr. Palermo is now an independent consultant focused on healthcare quality and safety, and physician leadership development.

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