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Lehigh Valley HEALTH

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September 11, 2012

Beware button batteries

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Posted by [Tim Darragh](#) at 03:24:19 PM on September 11, 2012

Anybody who is or has been a parent knows that when it comes to babies and toddlers, there is little that they won't put in their mouths. Our increasingly minaturized world means there are more opportunities for disaster. That's why a recent federal report should be required reading for new parents.

Those button batteries, the ones that power watches, toys remote controls and other electronic devices, are more prevalent than ever. That means there's been more cases of kids swallowing them. The batteries often get stuck in the tot's esophagus and can begin causing serious burns within two hours, it says. A handful of kids have died.

From 1997-2010, an estimated 40,400 kids were treated in emergency departments after having swallowed batteries, the report said, adding that the rate of cases is rising at a statistically significant rate.

It can be difficult to know when a child has swallowed a battery. According to the CDC, symptoms of battery swallowing include vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, diarrhea, respiratory distress, and dysphagia, or difficulty with swallowing. Serious complications and death were associated most frequently with 3-volt lithium, coin-size batteries around 20 millimeters in diameter, it said.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission says it is asking the electronics industry and battery manufacturers to develop warnings and industry standards to address this issue.

The commission has these recommendations to prevent unintentional battery ingestion:

- Discard button batteries carefully.
- Do not allow children to play with button batteries, and keep button batteries out of your child's reach.
- Caution hearing aid users to keep hearing aids and batteries out of the reach of children.
- Never put button batteries in your mouth for any reason as they are easily swallowed accidentally.
- Always check medications before ingesting them. Adults have swallowed button batteries mistaken for pills or tablets.
- Keep remotes and other electronics out of your child's reach if the battery compartments do not have a screw to secure them. Use tape to help secure the battery compartment.
- If a button battery is ingested, immediately seek medical attention. The National Battery Ingestion Hotline is available anytime at (202) 625-3333 (call collect if necessary), or call your poison center at (800) 222-1222.



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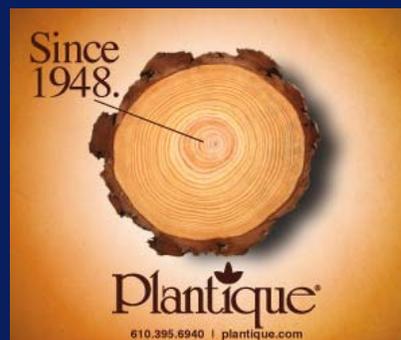
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ABOUT THE WRITERS



ALISA BOWMAN has been a health junkie and health journalist for nearly 20 years. A former newspaper reporter and magazine editor, her articles and essays have appeared in national magazines such as Parade, Better Homes & Gardens and Women's Health.

She runs, adores vegetables and meditates in Emmaus, where her husband and daughter are known to eat Cheetos behind her back. She also writes about marriage at [ProjectHappilyEverAfter.com](#).



MILTON CARRERO is a journalist, singer/songwriter and Yoga Instructor. The son of a physician and medical scholar, he was exposed to health theories since before he was born. He survived cancer at the age of 23, which awoke his interests in nutrition, meditation and alternative forms of medicine. He grew up in Puerto Rico and is married to a Lehigh Valley native. He has two children, a daughter and a son.



TIM DARRAGH has been reporting and editing the news for 30 years, most of it at The Morning Call. For much of that time, he's been doing award-winning investigative and in-depth reporting projects. Tim created the three-year-long Change of Heart project, and

wrote a series on the state's fractured food inspection system that led to widespread improvements in food safety. Meantime, that novice jogger you see plodding along the streets around Bethlehem Township? That would be Tim.



IRENE KRAFT has a passion for health and fitness. During her years at The Morning Call, she's been an award-winning nutrition writer, editor of health sections and an editor of Change of Heart, a three-year project focused on reducing

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[heart disease in the Lehigh Valley](#). She loves fitness walks with her dog Ranger. And she likes to think her younger son inherited his interest in health from her. He's a cardiologist practicing in the Valley.

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