Button Batteries: The Hidden Danger in your Home

by Guest Blogger on January 13, 2012

We are thrilled to host Karla Rauch of Emmett’s Fight Foundation today to help spread the word about a common danger we often overlook in our homes. Please read this important post, and share this critical information with the other parents you know. And when you’re done, head over to their site for more detailed information, including a video that really hits home with how accessible hazardous materials really are to our children.

My name is Karla Rauch. I am a wife and mother of two adorable boys. One year ago my husband Michael and I came close to losing our youngest son Emmett to a tragic accident. There was a danger in our home that was unknown to us and, as we have come to learn, to the majority of the parent population. We feel it our mission to help spread awareness to all who will take a moment to listen. We want to educate and encourage others to take action to prevent this senseless accident from happening to another family! Button batteries are extremely dangerous and can be deadly!!

My blue eyed, toe headed boy had just celebrated his 1st birthday. On the morning of October 16, 2010, Emmett came down with a fever and was very...
fussy. Michael took him to Urgent Care where we were told that it was just a common cold or flu virus. The next two days Emmett was still feverish, wanted to be held constantly and he had no desire to eat. I kept fighting internally with myself whether or not to take him back in to see the doctor. Was the virus just running its course or was it something more?

Tuesday morning, on our way to the pediatrician’s office, Emmett started vomiting up blood. That car ride felt like one of those bad dreams where the wheels kept spinning but I couldn’t get to my destination fast enough. The pediatrician immediately sent us to the Emergency Department (ED) to be evaluated. A chest x-ray was taken, and a button battery was discovered, lodged in his esophagus. Within minutes we were in an ambulance headed to Phoenix Children’s Hospital (PCH). I could not believe this was happening! I never remembered Emmett choking on anything. The physician explained that the battery was not lodged in his airway which would have caused him to choke; Emmett had tried to swallow the battery, therefore it was stuck in his esophagus. Where did he get this button battery? We discovered a few days later that it came from the remote control to our DVD player.

Emmett was rushed into a 3 hour surgery to remove the button battery. His surgeon, Dr. Craig Egan, came out to show us the blackened battery along with images of Emmett’s burnt esophagus. It had burned two holes in his esophagus and into his trachea (airway). The battery had then lodged itself one centimeter above his aorta, just missing his precious heart. Emmett was in critical condition and for 6 days we were not sure if he would survive. It has been a bumpy road but our sweet boy is a fighter and is still embracing each day with courage and strength beyond our understanding.

To this day he has endured: 28 surgical procedures, 4 inches of his esophagus have been removed, a portion of his stomach has been used to reconstruct his esophagus and he had a patch to repair his trachea. He currently has a Trach and is on a ventilator at night. He was in the Pediatric ICU for a total of eight months in 2011. Emmett cannot eat by mouth so he is fed using a G-tube (feeding tube in his tummy). He is susceptible to aspiration due to the damage and has had aspiration induced pneumonia 9 times since July of 2011, resulting in weakened lungs.

Yes, this is a heartbreaking and scary story. I never thought twice about button batteries before this horrific accident happened to my sweet Emmett. According to the National Poison Control, 3,500 cases of button battery ingestion occurred in 2010. There have been 11 deaths in the past few years. Phoenix Children’s Hospital has seen up to 6 ingestions a month! This is a serious issue and there are so many who are unaware of this “Hidden Danger”.

We have started a Non-Profit Foundation called Emmett’s Fight Foundation to educate families and caregivers about the dangers of button batteries. We hope by telling Emmett’s story we can save other children’s lives. Emmett’s Fight also has a blog. The blog gives updates on Emmett’s progress along with helpful safety tips. Button batteries can be found in remote controls, musical greeting cards, key fobs, digital scales, thermometers, toys, hearing aids, T-light candles, watches and many more electronic devices.

Little ones 0-4 years of age are most vulnerable to having severe damage from ingesting button batteries. The diameter of the esophagus in children 4 and under, are just small enough to lodge a coin size battery. When a button battery is ingested, the battery WILL start burning within 2 hours! Please seek medical attention immediately!! Do not be afraid to advocate for your child! Most importantly, please go through your homes and secure all of these batteries with strong tape or glue. Prevent this from happening to your child or any little one in your life! Please spread the word!!!

You might like:

- The Sitter Crisis
- Swaddling Is for Amateurs – Try Some Magic
- How To Feel Like An Asshole In Front Of Your Child’s Teacher
- iPadrenting and the Loss of Social Etiquette

Tagged as: batteries, Community involvement, Emmett’s Fight, Health, Safety

Like

70 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

This post by Guest Blogger

This could be you! We love guest bloggers. To submit material for It Builds Character, check out the details here. A short bio will be included with your post.

View other posts by Guest Blogger
If you like this post, you can follow It Builds Character on Twitter.

Subscribe to It Builds Character feed via RSS or EMAIL to receive instant updates.

Add New Comment

Showing 2 comments

Ashley

Oh my goodness. I can't even imagine what your family has been through with this! All our to love E that he continues to fight and get better. Sharing this story with my playgroup as we speak!!

Wendy

my God this story breaks my heart. I will share this warning and pray for darling Emmett. Thank you for being so generous & sharing your horrific experience.

Who Are We?

We're a group of parents muddling our way through, like everyone else. If it all works out, the kids' therapy bills will be cheaper than their college tuition. You can learn more about our writers on our Contributors page.

Popular Posts

- The Worst Things About Parenting, No. 17: Nutshots
- The Worst Things About Parenting, No. 22: Jenny McCarthy
- Poop Everywhere
- The Worst Things About Parenting, No. 5: Gwyneth Paltrow
- 10 Things That Changed When They Showed Up

Search

To search, type and hit
Finding Strength In A Story

Where Is The Elusive Balance?

10 Things That Changed When They Showed Up

You Can Also Find Us Here

We’re Involved

Button Batteries: The Hidden Danger in your Home — It Builds Character
http://www.itbuildscharacter.com/parenting/community/button-batteries...
Button Batteries: The Hidden Danger in your Home — It Builds Character
http://www.itbuildscharacter.com/parenting/community/button-batteries-...
About Us

IBC is a group blog that covers all things parenting.

Sometimes we’re funny and sometimes we’re serious. One thing is consistent: We have no idea what we’re doing. Meet the writers on our Contributors page.

Out and About

Recent Fan Favorites

- Potty Training and Well Meaning Moms
- Great Blogiversary Linkup Post: What Will I Be Blogging About In Ten Years?
- The Great Blogging Anniversary Linkup Week Has Begun!
- I Admit It. I Love My Crock Pot.

The Tweets on the Street

It is only when I decide to finally give up and go to bed when I get an onslaught of writing ideas.

Highlight of my day t.co/By62rMxc
@CiaoMom You do awesome things, every day. Hope you are feeling well tonight. xoxo
10 hours ago

[New post] @PenelopeNYC guest posts about potty training and well meaning moms - Have you been there? t.co/P8H8xVXU
10 hours ago

Blogging may just make me an optimist yet. Maybe. But then I'd really miss my snark.
10 hours ago