Prevent Kids From Swallowing Button Batteries

Children 6 and under most at risk for injury

By Children’s Health Team | 1/3/13 1:17 p.m.

Parents know toys with small parts can be a choking hazard for young children. But with today’s technology comes a new danger: button-size batteries powering toys and electronics.

These are linked to dangerous ingestions:

- Hearing aids (top the list)
- Games and toys
- Flashlights
- Watches
- Laser pointers

Growing problem

According to a recent study by the National Battery Ingestion Hotline Update, the average number of button-battery ingestions in the United States per month has grown from 30 in 2002 to more than 80 in 2012.

Children age 6 and under are most at risk. December and January are typically the months when the most button-battery ingestions occur.

If they swallow the batteries, children can choke or suffer from internal burns and even severe tissue damage because batteries contain harmful chemicals. Michael Benninger, MD
How to prevent injuries

Dr. Benninger says your best defense against preventing ingestion is to be vigilant. He suggests that parents:

1. **Dispose of used batteries properly.** “Don’t leave it on the counter or on the floor where a child or a pet can actually get to it,” Dr. Benninger says.

2. **Check the toys that have batteries.** Know which of your child’s toys have batteries in them and check to be sure they are well-secured.

3. **Act quickly if your child does swallow a battery.** Dr. Benninger says if your child swallows a button battery, you should call 911 immediately or get the child to an emergency room as quickly as possible.

4. **Don’t forget pets.** Dr. Benninger says pets are also vulnerable to ingesting batteries, so keep them in mind when you’re handling button batteries.

More information

Children’s Health [LINK: http://my.clevelandclinic.org/healthy_living/childrens_health]

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