


# Boy swallowed CELL BATTERY which burned his insides for 3 days before doctors discovered it

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February 12, 2015

'We can't leave hospital, he can't breathe': Mother's anguish after her eight-month-old son swallowed a tiny CELL BATTERY which burned his insides for three days before doctors discovered it

- **Amanda Hacche's baby son Devon swallowed a lithium-ion battery**
- **It corroded his oesophagus and wind pipe and now he may never be able to talk or breathe without the assistance of a machine**
- **For days doctors said he had bronchiolitis before took him to get an X-ray**

By Sarah Michael for Daily Mail Australia

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In December last year, Amanda Hacche went on a day trip for work and for the first time ever she left her eight-month-old son Devon behind.

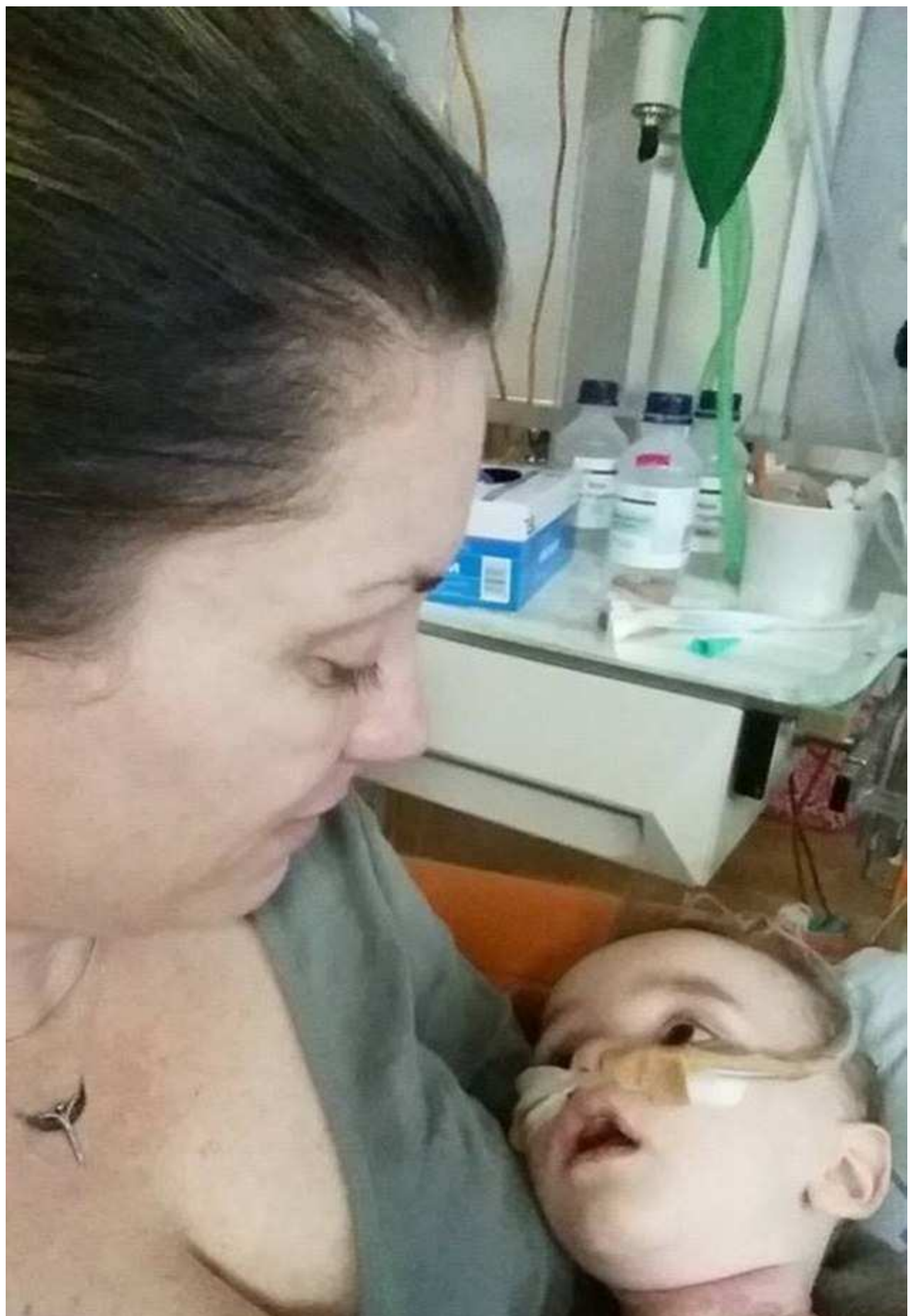
When she returned from Auckland, New Zealand, to her hometown of Tauranga to collect Devon from a family member she noticed he was unsettled and seemed like he had a sore throat.

For three days doctors insisted he had bronchiolitis, but Ms Hacche, 37, was unconvinced and when she took him to hospital three days later an X-ray revealed he had a lithium-ion battery lodged in his throat.

Now 10 months old, Devon faces an uncertain future and months in hospital intensive care as Ms Hacche comes to terms with the fact he may never speak or breathe unassisted.



Devon, now 10 months old, from Tauranga in New Zealand, swallowed a lithium-ion battery





His mother Amanda Hacche has to come to terms with the fact he may never speak or breathe unassisted

'In the beginning it seemed so surreal, I kept thinking "Is this really happening?"' she told Daily Mail Australia.

'And it's a process of the more you know, the more you realise how bad things are.'

Ms Hacche said after she picked Devon up on the evening of December 15 - a Monday – he started wheezing as he breathed.

Devon pictured before his horrific injury

'The doctor thought he had bronchiolitis, and I did question that at the time, the wheezing seemed to not be coming from his lungs but almost in his throat,' she said.

'By Wednesday evening he hadn't improved at all, which I thought the medicine should have given him some improvement.

'We were given asthma medication to open up and relax his throat but I couldn't do it, it was too upsetting for me, he became too distressed using the spacer.'

On Thursday morning Devon still hadn't improved so Ms Hacche took him to the emergency department at the hospital, where he was given an X-ray within 20 minutes.

The X-ray revealed the battery in his throat, with subsequent tests showing it had caused major internal corrosive burns.

'When they're inside the body the acids, excretions and moisture amplifies the electric charge [of the battery],' Ms Hacche said.

'It increases the rate of corrosion so the battery is actually speeding up the process of tissue damage.



'While the battery had been lodged low in his oesophagus it had actually corroded the tissue right through and caused a hole in oesophagus right through to his trachea.'

In addition an abscess formed with the laryngeal nerve – the nerve which controls his voice box – running right through it.

'We can't leave hospital, he can't breathe,' Ms Hacche said.

'It's been two months now, but we expect to be here a long time.'

Devon has undergone three major operations and more than 30 other smaller procedures.



An X-ray revealed a battery in his throat, with subsequent tests showing it had caused internal corrosive burns



In addition an abscess formed, with the nerve which controls his voice box running right through it

He is confined to his hospital bed, and can only sit up out of bed if he's held by a family member.

This is particularly heartbreaking for Ms Hacche, who last year was watching her son meet all his milestones early.

'He was meeting them and blowing them away,' she said.

'He was pulling himself to standing. He started crawling at six months.

'He was saying words like "Mama" and "Da". "Da" was his favourite.'

Ms Hacche has to be by her son's side every day and is now living at Auckland's Ronald McDonald house with her six-year-old daughter.



She had spent years building up her own successful human resources and employment law business but has had to let her clients go to be there for Devon.

With her main source of income gone, her sister has set up a fundraising page to help the family cover their living and medical expenses.



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But Ms Hacche said even more important than raising money was telling her story to spread a warning about the danger of batteries to other parents.

'I'm anally-retentive, vacuum cleaning, OCD tidier upperer,' she said.

'And these things are so prevalent in our homes, from kitchen scales to little bedside alarm clocks, car keys, digital remotes from iPod docking stations.'

'They seem so benign and that's the way we treat them but they're not they're incredibly dangerous.'

Ms Hacche said battery wounds can be fatal within a few hours.

'We don't always have eyes in the back of our heads so it can happen to anybody and you've just got to be so aware of how dangerous they are,' she said.

'If our story shows one parent the dangers and saves one family from this journey to hell that we've been on and the tortuous situation for Devon and what it means for his future then it's worth it.'