

New Zealand Baby Now Disabled after Swallowing Batteries

YH youthhealthmag.com/articles/9695/20150213/devon-hacche-button-batteries-button-battery-swallowing-amanda-hacche-kidsafe.htm

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(Photo : Christopher Furlong | Getty Images News)

A baby is currently fighting for his life after swallowing button batteries, prompting an urgent and serious call to parents to pay more attention.

Eighth-month-old Devon Hacche from Tauranga still remains in the intensive care unit in a hospital in Auckland since December 19, 2014. He had accidentally swallowed button batteries with lithium ions. Button batteries are small, flat, and circular, so they are very easy to swallow even by small children.

The accident happened four days before he was admitted. According to his mother, Amanda, he was initially diagnosed with bronchiolitis on December 17 when her son developed some mild wheezing and runny nose. He also seemed to be not in the mood.

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After the medications didn't work but instead the condition worsened, she brought her baby to a local hospital. Upon X-ray, it was discovered that the battery was lodged right in his esophagus.

Devon immediately underwent an operation but was airlifted to an Auckland health care facility, Starship, when the doctors discovered the effects were extremely severe.

The lithium ion interacted negatively with the gastric fluids and saliva produced by the body, making the environment corrosive. Due to the softness of the tissue of the esophagus, the battery left a deep and significant hole in the baby's esophagus. It also significantly affected his trachea, severing the nerves responsible for vocal cord modulation.

The baby has already gone through more than 3 surgeries including a major one where he was linked to a bypass machine to correct the tissue damage.

But the prognosis remains poor. Amanda said that Devon may never be able to talk due to the damage to the vocal cords. He may also not be able to breathe on his own.

This latest case of button battery ingestion compelled Kidsafe, Australia's foundation for prevention of childhood accidents, to issue tips to parents, including keeping these batteries out of reach and out of sight of children and to seek immediate help if they suspect an ingestion.