

Dangers Of Children Swallowing Button Batteries Highlighted In New Campaign Aimed At Parents

'The batteries can burn a hole through the throat.'

By Amy Packham

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The dangers of [children](#) swallowing button batteries are being highlighted in a new campaign.

The Child Accident Prevention Trust ([CAPT](#)) and the British and Irish Portable Battery Association ([BIPBA](#)) have joined forces to provide guidance to parents on how to handle the batteries around children.

They said button cells have been linked to serious injuries and even death among small children, and lithium cell batteries (also small, round batteries) are a “particular concern” as they have a higher voltage.

“Toddlers are hugely curious and love to explore,” said Katrina Phillips, CAPT’s chief executive. “But if they swallow a button battery and it gets stuck in their throat, the battery’s energy can react with bodily fluids to create caustic soda.

“This can burn a hole through the throat and cause serious internal bleeding or even death.”



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CAPT has warned that it may not always be obvious that a button battery is stuck in a child's throat.

“There are no specific symptoms associated with this,” [the CAPT website states](#).

“They may appear to have a stomach upset or a virus. Symptoms may include tiredness, loss of appetite, pain and nausea.

“The lack of clear symptoms means it may not be obvious that your child has swallowed a button battery until it's too late. This is why it is important to be vigilant with spare button batteries in the home and the products that contain them.”

If you suspect your child has swallowed a battery, parents are advised to “act fast”:

- Take them straight to the A&E department at your local hospital.
- Tell the doctor there that you think your child has swallowed a button battery.
- If you have the battery packaging or the product powered by the battery, take it with you. This will help the doctor identify the type of battery and make treatment easier.
- Do not let your child eat or drink.
- Do not make them sick.
- Trust your instincts and act fast.

Frank Imbescheid, BIPBA's chair, said: “We will work together to ensure that parents, families and healthcare professionals have the right information to keep children safe.

“Battery manufacturers are continuously working to reduce the risk of ingestion through various initiatives.”

In February 2016, [it was reported that a toddler from Colorado, US, had to be fed through a tube](#) after he swallowed a tiny battery that burned a hole through his throat. Two-year-old Logan Stiff swallowed the button battery - which came from a remote control - while at [nursery](#).

His parents Jackie, 38, and Andrew Stiff, 34, picked him up from nursery a few hours later, and the toddler was vomiting as the battery had burned a hole in his oesophagus.

“We had no idea how dangerous these batteries could be, nor did most of our friends and family,” said Mr Stiff.

“It was a shocking realisation and we want to make sure everyone we knew could learn about this too.”

For further advice on button battery safety, visit [CAPT's website](#) or the [British and Irish Portable Battery Association](#).