

# Toddler nearly killed by BATHROOM SCALES after eating battery acid and mum only worked it out when she weighed herself

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A toddler was left fighting for his life after his insides were burnt by acid when he swallowed a button battery from weighing scales.

Chrissy and Elliott Lennon, of Worthing, West Sussex, were at home on May 29 when, out of the blue, their one-year-old boy Ollie started violently vomiting black liquid.

Unable to keep any food down, doctors initially suspected asthma or croup, a childhood barking cough, but when he threw up four more times in an hour his parents were terrified.

"We called 101, the NHS advice line, and a doctor at Worthing Hospital called back in 15 minutes," Elliott, who works in a nursing home, explained.



The battery Ollie ate that made him so unwell (Image: PA Real Life)

Charlie Gard's parents will find out tomorrow if they can take him home to die on Monday

They were advised to keep an eye on their boy, but the next morning he was still very ill.

They were stumped – until 29-year-old full-time mum Chrissy, who'd just started a diet, went to weigh herself but the scales didn't work.

She looked underneath and saw the button battery was missing.

She put two-and-two together and rushed tiny Ollie to Worthing Hospital – where an X-ray showed he'd swallowed the button.

"I was at work but rushed straight home," said Elliott, 27.



Ollie was in hospital for two months (Image: PA Real Life)

“Normally doctors at the hospital wouldn’t perform surgery on a boy as young as Ollie but as it was an emergency, they did.”

On May 30, a day after he ate the button, Ollie underwent hour-and-a-half surgery.

But medics initially could not remove the battery, which was lodged in the lower part of his throat.

“But, as they moved him, the battery dislodged and the surgeons were able to reach it and remove it,” his dad explained.

However, it had corroded and medics feared the acid in it had burnt his insides.

He was taken by emergency ambulance to the larger Southampton General Hospital 55 miles away.

Still in an induced coma following surgery, scans revealed he had scarring and acid burns to his trachea – but thankfully no holes to his wind pipe, throat or organs.

“We were so relieved,” said his dad. “He was kept in a coma as he was so ill and would have been in a lot of pain.”





His parents said he is lucky to be alive (Image: PA Real Life)

In early June, while still in Southampton, he was brought round from the coma. But, disaster struck a few days later when his breathing became ragged.

Further scans were carried out and medics established a 1.2cm hole had formed in his trachea. It had caused his left lung to collapse.

"We couldn't believe it," his dad said. "It had an impact on his lungs, and so his left lung collapsed.

We were told he needed to be transported straight away to Great Ormond Street Hospital in London where they had specialist treatment, and could deal with him better."

Once again put in an induced coma, he was taken by ambulance to the paediatric intensive care unit at Great Ormond Street.

"Things escalated quickly," said Elliott. "We were giving accommodation by a charity near to the hospital but that night, while in bed, we got a call from a nurse.

She said a security guard would be at our accommodation any moment to escort us to the hospital and we needed to see Elliott."



Now Ollie is a happy boy and is recovering well (Image: PA Real Life)

There, an anaesthetist was waiting. He revealed Elliot's condition had deteriorated so rapidly that he needed an operation immediately to replace the damaged, holey tubes with fresh ones.



These would be taken from the back of his heart, where the valves were stronger.

"It was a heart and lung bypass," explained Elliott. "He was given a one in 10 chance of survival. It was, hands down, the worst day of both of our lives.

"We were told, quite honestly, he could die. Seeing our little boy so ill was dreadful."

For the next seven hours the Lennons paced the corridors. Finally, they were given the news Ollie, who has a brother Riley, three, had survived surgery.

He was kept in an induced coma for around a week and gradually brought round.



Parents Elliott and Chrissy are now sharing their son Ollie's story to raise awareness of the dangers of button batteries (Image: PA Real Life)

However, because medics wanted to keep him still, they kept him partially paralysed for a while.



“Normally he is so active,” his dad said. “So that didn’t go down well.”

Finally, towards the end of June, he could get up. He started moving about, although was still tube fed.

And on July 17 – after nearly two months in hospital – he was allowed home.

His dad had shared his son’s movements while in hospital on Facebook, and the news was met with jubilation.

But the long-term impact for Ollie is unknown.

“Now he can’t eat solids, so we are liquidising everything,” said Elliott. “He can also only groan. However, he is alive. And that is brilliant.”

Now, Elliott and Chrissy want parents to know about the dangers of button batteries in toys and household items such as children’s thermometers and bathroom scales.

“People need to be aware,” said Elliott. “We’ve already noticed other items and toys with them in, and got rid of them – it isn’t worth it.”

Elliott is raising money for Great Ormond Street in Ollie’s name.