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A new danger from an old problem

written by: [Jeffrey Wolf](#) [Corey Rose](#) ■ 12 hrs ago

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AURORA - They can be found anywhere: in thermometers, hearing aids, even those popular singing cards - tiny round batteries.

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There has been story after story about kids swallowing them thinking they were toys, and for the most part, when the battery was out of the system the health risks were minimal.

But over the last few years the fatality rate for children who swallow batteries has gone up.

"We've seen a change in the course of the past two years is the types of injuries caused by button batteries. We think that relates to the change of lithium batteries which carries twice the amount of voltage than the alkaline batteries," Dr. Robert Kramer, with The Children's Hospital in Aurora, said.

Fifteen years ago, most devices primarily used alkaline batteries.

Today, lithium batteries are used, and they are much more powerful than alkaline and can cause a lot more damage, a lot faster.

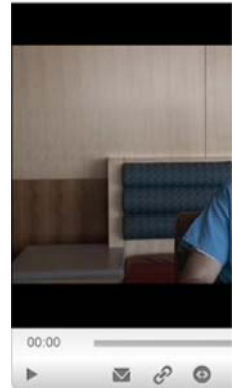
"When they get trapped in the esophagus, they're causing severe injury in a very rapid time course. When it gets stuck in the throat it basically causes an electrical burn," Kramer said.

In 1993, there were no deaths reported from button batteries, but those numbers have changed.

"The Battery Ingestion Center has released a new study and there's on the order of about 14 fatal episodes in a relatively short time. That's likely because of the change in battery," Kramer said.

If the battery makes it to the stomach, the health risks are basically gone. It is when the battery gets stuck along the way that causes huge problems.

After the battery is removed, the effects keep progressing.



Experts say the battery's electrical current sets off a chemical reaction in the esophagus, burning through both the esophageal wall and attacking the aorta.

Patients have been sent home after the battery was removed and die days, even weeks later.

"There have been catastrophic injuries that have occurred more than two weeks after removal of the battery," Kramer said.

On the back of every battery package, there is a number to call if someone does swallow the contents.

Doctors say it is a matter of minutes, not hours to seek medical help, and to call 911 the moment you think your child has swallowed a battery.

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CJApplewood wrote:

Oh my, I am speechless ...

anythingsensible wrote:

I find it unbelievable that when a mother puts herself out there to help save other children from experiencing a similar ordeal, that stupid braindead self-absorbed jackasses can only ridicule her unselfishness. Yes, the kid was in an advanced summer program. The project was building a robot. With very intelligent child, experimentation is not that rare. All the hipe that is thrown at kids about superheros and robot, it not that hard to understand that he thought he could be a superhero by swallowing a battery. And no Blorky, you're not very smart.

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Pharmsci wrote:

I would just like to thank all the hard working Doctors at Children's Hospital, all the people around the country and the world that prayed for tristan, and God for spearing his life. Hi, I am tristan's uncle, I am a PhD student in Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh and I just hope that the message from this news cast may protect other children and parents from having to go through what we are going through. This is a very real danger. Thank you 9 news

7/27/2010 10:30 PMPDT on 9news.com

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Blorky wrote:

atwaterkent wrote:

If yer kids are dumb enough to eat batteries maybe parents should turn off the TV and actually watch them...

What a concept!

No doubt. What else are these kids eating? Dur. I'm no Einstein, but I never ate any funky foreign objects when I was a kid, either.

7/27/2010 9:33 PMPDT on 9news.com

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SoshalE_Nept wrote:

i love those judgmental d-bags who don't have kids-i wonder how many times their parents dropped them on their heads???

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jeepcreeprrr wrote:

come on 9 snooze we can comment on this stupid story but not that brave soldier or the weed topic,you guys are weak!

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Adam_West wrote:

@kellyjason914

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