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## Lithium batteries pose dangers to young kids

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*Updated: Aug 03, 2010 9:55 PM EDT*

**Las Vegas, NV (KTNV)** - Parents know that babies are curious, and almost everything they touch ends up in their mouth. What parents don't know is there's an increasing threat with certain kinds of batteries found in items all over the house, many of which are well within a child's reach.

Cara and Terry George light up when they think of their daughter Brenna. But they endured crushing heartbreak when Brenna died at just a year and a half when she swallowed a battery that caused fatal internal injuries.

"We scoured our house and we have no idea where it came from," said Terry.

It was a lithium battery. The round type that you find in all kinds of household items. The National Capital Poison Center recently did a study looking at 8,000 cases of battery ingestions.

Not all of them involved lithium batteries, but they discovered these batteries pose much more than the typical choking hazard.

Dr. Blaze Gusic with St. Rose Pediatrics says they can cause serious damage to the esophagus.

"They have more current they can produce with the lithium batteries and that can cause more damage to the tissues if it sits up against the tissues, especially in the esophagus," said Dr. Gusic.

The poison center gets calls involving about 3,500 cases of battery ingestion each year and the calls are more serious than ever with 13 deaths and 73 severe injuries.

"Other than dying kids can have some serious chemical burns on the inside of the esophagus. They may end up needing tracheotomies to breath feeding tubes to eat," said Dr. Gusic.

The George's still don't know where Brenna found the battery she ingested. Dr. Gusic says that's the biggest problem.

"Most cases are unwitnessed so if they are ingested the parents don't see it happening and most of the symptoms the kids have would be non specific," said Dr. Gusci.

The bottom line is many health and child safety advocates want to see more warning labels on products using lithium batteries. They'd like to see manufacturers make the battery compartments on toys and other gadgets more secure.

Those changes are crucial considering the number of incidents involving lithium batteries is up nearly 20% in the last decade.



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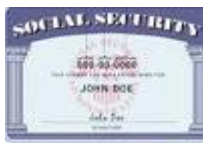
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