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Button Battery Dangers

Tiny batteries can be deadly if swallowed.

By **Erika Edwards**
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Young children have the ability to turn anything into a toy, especially the family's remote control.

It's what little Max Sadauskas playing with about an hour before he became ill a year ago, suddenly throwing up his dinner.

His mother Susan retraced her son's steps to try to figure out what was wrong with him.

"I found the remote a couple seconds later, and I couldn't find the button battery," she explains.

Max had swallowed the lithium button battery inside the remote.

It lodged in his esophagus.

Once there it's only a matter of hours until the battery creates an electrical current and burns through tissue.

Caregivers usually don't see it happen, and it can difficult for doctors to diagnose.

"Children will have non-specific symptoms, such as a cough, a fever, they're more irritable. Symptoms that are consistent that you see in a common viral illness with children," says Dr. Kris Jatana.

A 2010 study from the National Capital Poison Center found an almost seven-fold increase in battery ingestions over the past 25 years.

They've been linked to at least 13 deaths.

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Now Consumer Product Safety Commission Chairwoman Inez Tenenbaum says her group is taking a close look at the batteries.

"We have a consortium of countries looking at button batteries, because children find these small little shiny things and put them in their mouths," says CPSC chairwoman Inez Tenenbaum.

Max and his family are lucky.


He recovered with minimal damage.

Now they're telling their story in hopes of protecting other children.


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