

# She woke in a pool of blood: hospital misdiagnosed baby who swallowed button battery, coroner hears



Liam Mannix

SHARE TWEET MORE

"What we would give to have another chance to hear your voice, to feel your kiss and to see you grow," wrote the Rees family in Isabella's [tribute](#).

"Our hearts are broken".



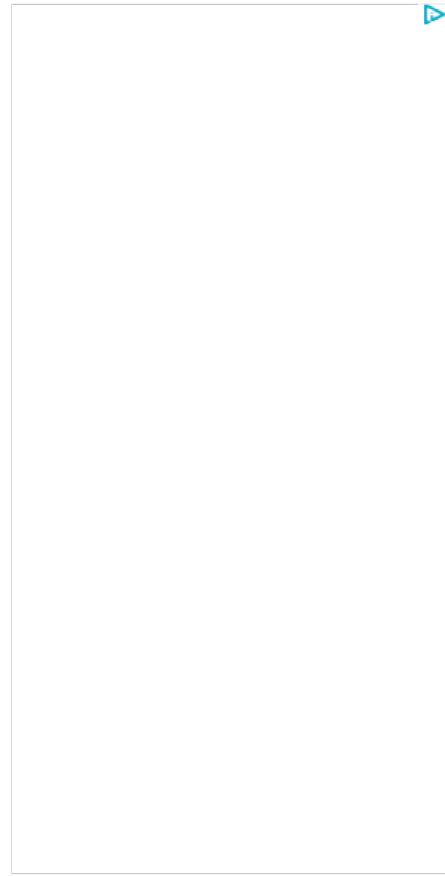
Isabella Rees, with her large brown eyes and cheeky grin Photo: Bella's Footprints / Facebook

At the age of one, Isabella swallowed a button battery. No one knows precisely when. It lodged in her oesophagus, and made her sick.

Her parents took her to hospital several times over two weeks, but staff didn't pick up the presence of the battery until it was too late, the Coroners Court heard on Thursday.

She died in the morning of February, 4, 2015, from cardiac arrest, on the operating table at Sunshine Hospital.

Her mother, Allison Rees, has since led the [campaign](#) for stronger



Advertisement

product safety laws to protect children from the lethal batteries. Lithium batteries are in a range of household objects including car keys, remote controls and musical birthday cards.

Advertisement

When swallowed they can spark a chemical reaction that quickly burns through flesh.

Choice and other consumer action groups have been [campaigning](#) for a mandatory standard to secure button batteries inside devices with a screw, rather than a plastic latch which can be opened by a child's hand.



#### BREAKING NEWS ALERT

Get the latest news and updates emailed straight to your inbox.



By submitting your email you are agreeing to Fairfax Media's [terms and conditions](#) and [privacy policy](#).

The Victorian State Coroner is currently considering whether to hold an inquest into Isabella's death, and whether to make any recommendations about strengthening safety laws – or about the way doctors check for button-battery related injuries.

Her story, as drawn from the brief of evidence before the coroner, has parallels to that of four-year-old Summer Steer. In 2013 the Sunshine Coast girl swallowed a button battery. Despite several visits to the hospital, and vomiting blood, she was wrongly diagnosed and sent home. She too died.

On Thursday baby Isabella's tragic story was told to Victorian coroner Caitlin English.

Isabella first presented at Sunshine Hospital Emergency Department last January 16, a Saturday, with crying and vomiting. Her father believes he told staff there that she had swallowed something – but this is not recorded in the hospital's medical records, the coroner heard.

The vomiting stopped, and Isabella was sent home, where she ran a fever. Her mother brought her back to the hospital Monday; while there, she found the remnants of a broken water balloon in her nappy.

The hospital told Isabella's mother her child had a urinary tract infection, and she was given a course of antibiotics. She finished that course and a hospital review on January 21 indicated that she appeared to be improving.

## MOST POPULAR

- 1 Nearly 70 per cent of year 9 students will have to re-sit exam to reach HSC
- 2 'Working for nothing': Childcare crisis pushes Sydney parents to the brink
- 3 Doctors ordering 'incredibly unreliable' tests for pregnant women
- 4 Record number of flu cases test NSW hospitals
- 5 Woman's 12-kilo liver: 'It's pretty much like being pregnant for years and years'

## PROPERTY NEWS

Gentrification of Darlinghurst sees ...



A great divide: The downfall of ...



## FOLLOW SMH

Fifteen days after the hospital visit, her mother found her in her cot, surrounded by a large amount of her own blood. Her clothes were saturated.

Mum Allison rushed her to the hospital, where the baby vomited dark dry blood. It was only then that she was x-rayed – and a round object was spotted in her oesophagus.

A little over three hours after arriving at the emergency department, Isabella passed away, the victim of multiple cardiac arrests.

On Thursday, she ordered additional expert reports before she makes a decision on whether to hold an inquest.

She said two key questions were still before her – when it was likely Isabella ingested the battery, as the family and the hospital gave differing accounts, and whether there were any preventative measures open to her to recommend.

### YOU MIGHT LIKE

#### Ellen Set to Become The Richest Woman In The World

JUICYCELEB.COM SPONSORED



### RECOMMENDED

powered by plista



LIFESTYLE

The cleavage wars strike again, this time it's back after a brief absence



NEWS

From \$150 to \$1 million: Couple caught in wedding photography nightmare



HUFFINGTON POST

Donald Trump Signs Russia Sanctions Bill



NEWS

She gave evidence against her criminal son. Then she took a bullet to her belly

FROM THE WEB

Ellen Set to Become The Richest Woman In The World



LIFESTYLE

Our body shapes have changed over the years, and they're still changing

NEWS

Dog which killed a woman in her 50s will be put down



NEWS

In a stunning cry for help, Trump's aides admit the president misled the...

