

Poison Prevention Press

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March 20-26, 2016 is Poison Prevention Week (PPW)

Take this time to help make your world poison safe:

- Program 1-800-222-1222 into your mobile phones. Using this number you will reach a poison center 24/7 anywhere in the U.S.
- Request a poison information packet for your home, order educational materials for a group and use our home safety checklist to make sure your home is poison safe. Go to www.mdpoison.com for all of this and more!
- Read product labels carefully every time you use a household product or medicine.
- Store products in their original containers.
- Call the poison center as soon as you suspect a poisoning or overdose.

Did you know that...

- There were 3,419 button battery ingestions reported to U.S. poison centers in 2014?
- ~62% of reported button battery ingestions by children under 6 years old involved batteries removed from the household product or toy by the child?

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Button Batteries: Tiny But Dangerous

The tragic death of a 2 year old girl in Oklahoma in December serves as a reminder of the danger of button batteries. In this case, the parents did not realize their daughter had swallowed the battery. She did not have any symptoms until it was too late.



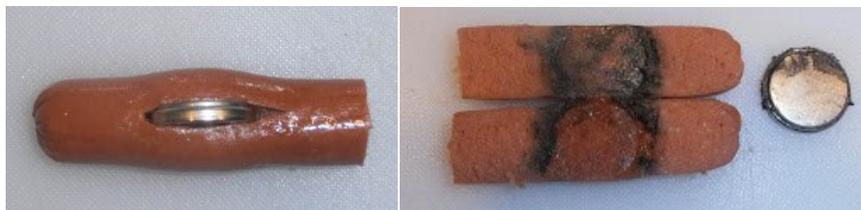
Button batteries can be found in toys, remote controls, hearing aids, watches, musical greeting cards, calculators and other electronic devices. Many button batteries are smaller than a coin. Newer batteries are a bit larger in size, between the size of a penny and a nickel. They are also more powerful. Because of their size, a button battery can be swallowed by a child without a parent realizing.

Children often get ahold of button batteries by removing them from a toy or household item. They may also find them lying loose on the table or get them directly from a package of batteries they find in the home. Although less common, adults may swallow button batteries as well. Adults may mistake the battery for a pill. They may also hold the battery in their mouth when they are getting ready to place it in their hearing aid.

Most batteries that are swallowed pass through the body without harm. The major risk involves the battery getting stuck in the esophagus (the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach). If the battery becomes stuck, it can cause severe damage in as little as two hours. When stuck, it begins to generate a current. This can lead to a burn or damage to the tissue around where the battery is lodged. The photos below use a hotdog to represent the esophagus. Lodging a battery into the slit in the hotdog leads to the burned areas in just 3 hours. Injuries can also happen when smaller batteries are put in the nose or ear.

As soon as it is thought that a battery is missing, call the poison center (1-800-222-1222). The specialist in poison information will gather the information and recommend that the child go to the nearest hospital. The specialist will also call the hospital to make recommendations on how to manage the situation. An X-ray should be done as soon as possible. If the battery is in the esophagus, it should be removed right away. If it is in the stomach, it can pass on its own. The stool should be checked to make sure the battery passes. A repeat X-ray may be recommended if the battery has not been found when the poison specialist calls to follow up. Adults are treated the same as children...call the poison center right away.

It is important to remember that a button battery can be stuck in the esophagus even if the person is not coughing or complaining of pain or any other symptoms. Call the poison center as soon as it is noticed that a button battery is missing. This quick action may save a life.



Pictures courtesy of Steven Marcus, M.D., New Jersey Poison Control Center