THE PROBLEM:

Button batteries, also known as disk batteries or lithium cell batteries, are small coin-shaped batteries found in many common products including hearing aids, remote control devices, “talking” books and greeting cards, flashing jewelry, and some games and toys. Young children are attracted to the tiny, shiny batteries and may swallow them or put them into their ear or nose. This could cause devastating injuries.

WHAT IS THE HARM?

Swallowed foreign objects usually pass through the body within a few days, causing little harm. However, sometimes an object gets stuck along the way. When a button battery gets stuck in the esophagus, or if it remains inserted in the nose or ear, it can cause chemical burns to the surrounding tissues within as little as 2 hours. The image on the left shows the burns left behind when a button battery was placed in a hot dog for only a few hours.

U.S. poison centers report more than 3,000 calls about button battery exposures each year. More than half of all calls are about children under age 6. Many of these exposures result in moderate to severe injuries, often requiring hospitalization and even surgery. Since 2010, there have been more than 20 deaths from button battery exposures. These exposures are preventable. Read on to learn how you can protect your loved ones.

\(^1\)National Poison Data System (NPDS) and National Battery Ingestion Hotline (NBIH) Button Battery Ingestions. Frequency and Severity for Moderate, Major, and Fatal Outcomes 1985-2017.
BE SAFE. Prevent button battery exposures:

- Keep loose batteries stored UP and AWAY, out of the sight and reach of children.
- Secure battery compartments on all devices.
- Avoid replacing batteries in front of children.
- Avoid allowing children under age 6 to play with or chew on devices or toys that contain button batteries.
- Used batteries may still be able to cause harm. Don’t leave discarded button batteries in a trash can.
- Beware of musical greeting cards. Children are fascinated by them, but there is a button battery inside.
- If someone in your home wears hearing aids, give them safe place to store and discard batteries.

WHAT TO DO:

If you suspect someone has swallowed a button battery, or inserted one into the nose or ear, call the Blue Ridge Poison Center right away, day or night: 1-800-222-1222. Do not wait for any symptoms, do not give any food or drink, and do not induce vomiting.

For help with any suspected poisoning or overdose. 1-800-222-1222 or www.poisonhelp.org. Fast, free, private.