

"Button" or Disc Batteries

Get the Facts! From the Blue Ridge Poison Center at UVA Health

Button batteries, also known as disc batteries or lithium cell batteries, are small coin-shaped batteries found in many common products including hearing aids, remote control devices, and any costume jewelry, games or toys that light up or make noise. Young children are attracted to the tiny, shiny batteries and may swallow them or put them into their ear or nose. This can cause devastating injuries.



What is the problem?

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 throat, or if it remains inserted in the nose or ear, it can cause burns to the surrounding tissues. Injuries can be severe, requiring hospitalization or surgery. Sadly, some children have died from these injuries.

The image below shows the burns left behind when a button battery was placed inside a hot dog for only two hours.



A hot dog burned by a button battery after 2 hours of contact.

If a child swallows a button battery, there may not be any symptoms right away, even while damage is being done. **When symptoms are present, they may include:**

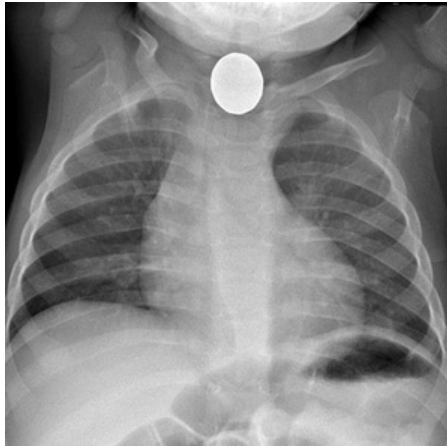
- Crying
- Noisy breathing
- Coughing
- Drooling
- Refusing to eat or drink
- Difficulty swallowing
- Gagging, coughing or choking while trying to eat or drink.
- Sore throat
- Vomiting



The Blue Ridge Poison Center at UVA Health

www.brpc.virginia.edu

'Button' or Disc Batteries (continued from front)



X-ray image showing a button battery stuck in a child's throat.

If young children are in your home--even if only occasionally--take steps to keep them safe.

- Keep batteries stored UP and AWAY, out of the sight and reach of children.
- Secure battery compartments on devices like remote controls with strong tape. Store them up high, where children cannot reach.
- Avoid letting children under age 6 handle devices, jewelry, or toys that contain button batteries.
- 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 a safe place to store and discard their batteries.

A button battery can cause burns when left in contact with any body part, even for a short time.

What if I think my child swallowed a button battery?

Do not give the child anything to eat or drink, and do not make the child throw up.

Call the Blue Ridge Poison Center right away (1-800-222-1222), or take the child to an emergency medical facility. Seek help even if you aren't sure the child swallowed it, or even if no symptoms are present. An x-ray can determine if a battery is stuck in the throat or has passed into the stomach.

