



Fact Sheet

Button batteries

Every week, around 20 Australian children present to hospital emergency departments following exposure to button batteries – by either swallowing them or inserting them into their bodies.



Button batteries are in many common household items such as:

- remote control car keys
- TV remote controls
- calculators
- kitchen and bathroom scales and greeting cards.

Contact the Poisons Information Centre immediately on **13 11 26** if you suspect a child has swallowed a button battery

What happens?

If swallowed, coin-sized button batteries can lodge in a child's gastrointestinal system.

Saliva immediately triggers an electrical current. This causes a chemical reaction which can cause severe burns to the child's oesophagus and internal organs such as the lungs, heart, arteries and spine.

It can take only a few hours, resulting in serious injury or death. These injuries can occur even if the swallowed battery is flat.



Symptoms

- gagging or choking
- drooling
- chest pain – which may present as grunting
- coughing or noisy breathing
- unexplained vomiting or refusing to eat
- bleeding from the gut resulting in black or red vomits or bowel motions
- nose bleeds – sometimes this can be blood vomited through the nose
- unexplained fever



- If you think a child has swallowed a button battery, immediately contact the **Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26**. You will be directed to the nearest hospital or emergency service that can manage the injury.
- DO NOT let the child eat or drink
- DO NOT induce vomiting

Buying tips

Look for products that do not run on button batteries.

If you do buy button battery operated products, look for ones where the battery compartment requires a tool or dual simultaneous movement to open. This makes it difficult for a young child to access the battery.

Safe use

- Keep products with button batteries out of sight and out of reach of small children.
- Check devices and make sure a child cannot get access to the batteries inside.
- Throw out used button batteries immediately. Flat batteries can still be dangerous.
- Tell others about the risks with button batteries and how to keep their children safe.

For more information got to www.productsafety.gov.au

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