



BATTEN DOWN YOUR BUTTON BATTERIES

These small, coin sized batteries can be found in most remote control devices. They can also be found in reading lights, flashlights, flameless candles, talking and singing books and greeting cards, bathroom scales, hearing aids, and car remotes. These small batteries are found in nearly every home in America and everyone should be aware of their danger.

Just in the last week the Nebraska Regional Poison Center received four button battery ingestion calls. Young children and senior adults are unintentionally swallowing the button batteries and the results can be serious. A recent study found that button battery-related incidents resulting in severe injury and fatality have increased sevenfold since 1985. In 2010 alone, more than 3,400 ingestions were reported in the U.S. Batteries may become lodged in the throat or intestine, which can result in a dangerous chemical burn. The lithium button batteries pose a serious problem as saliva immediately triggers an electrical current that causes a chemical reaction that can severely burn the esophagus in as little as two hours.

Children gain access from items that are left within their reach and adults have swallowed button batteries used in hearing aids after mistaking them for pills. Sometimes parents are unaware that a child has swallowed a button battery- which makes diagnosing the problem difficult. Symptoms can mimic common illnesses often seen in children such as upset stomach and fever. In a recent study more than 60 percent of incidents were initially misdiagnosed.

Follow these steps to prevent unintentional battery ingestion:

- Discard button batteries carefully.
- Do not allow children to play with button batteries, and keep them out of your child's reach.
- Caution hearing aid users to keep hearing aids and batteries out of the reach of children.
- Never put button batteries in your mouth for any reason as they are easily swallowed.
- Always check medications before ingesting them. Adults have swallowed button batteries mistaken for pills or tablets.
- Keep remotes and other electronics out of your child's reach if the battery compartments do not have a screw to secure them. Use tape to help secure the battery compartment.

The Nebraska Regional Poison is a free service to the community. Please call for any questions you may have at 1-800-222-1222.