

# Button Batteries

safekids  
Aotearoa

Starship  
Foundation



Young children love to take things apart and put things in their mouths. This helps them to learn about the world. It also puts them at risk of swallowing harmful objects. Products are often designed without taking into consideration the possible harm they could cause if used incorrectly by children.

Button batteries are extremely powerful and are a real danger to children if they are swallowed. They are found in everyday household things like watches, toys, hearing aids, remote controls, musical greeting cards and other electronic devices which are often within easy reach of children. Parents and caregivers are often not aware of the severe injuries that can be caused if they are swallowed or put into the ear or nose.

Injuries happen because saliva or moisture within the body comes into contact with the button battery and creates an electrical

current. This electrical current can cause severe burns and tissue damage. This damage can continue even after the battery is removed. Often a child swallows a battery without anyone noticing. They may continue to breathe and behave normally while damage is already happening. If there is any indication, it may just seem like they have a cold or the flu. It is important to take steps to prevent these injuries before they happen.

**20** Around **20** children every year are taken to the Starship Emergency Department because of button battery-related injuries, or because they are suspected of swallowing one.

The National Poisons Centre receives around **29** calls each year about young children swallowing button batteries or getting them stuck in their ears or nose.

Serious damage can occur in as little as **2** hours.

## WHERE DO CHILDREN GET HOLD OF BUTTON BATTERIES?

- 61.8% directly from a product
- 29.8% loose batteries
- 8.2% batteries in their packaging

## WHO IS BEING AFFECTED?



**1-2 YEARS**  
Children from 1-2 years old are the most at risk.

## ACTUAL SIZE

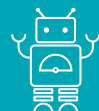


20mm button batteries are most likely to get stuck in a child's throat.

## COMMON ITEMS THAT CONTAIN BUTTON BATTERIES



CLOCKS & WATCHES



TOYS



MUSICAL BOOKS & CARDS



REMOTE CONTROLS



HEARING AIDS



CAR KEYS



CALCULATORS



CAMERAS



TORCHES



DIGITAL THERMOMETERS

## Top Safety Tips



### SEARCH

your home and any place your child goes for items that may contain button batteries.



### SECURE

button battery controlled devices out of sight and reach of children and keep loose batteries locked away.



### SHARE

this life saving information with caregivers, friends, family and whānau.

- Only keep toys in reach that match your child's stage of development. Store the rest up high and out of reach.
- Search your home and any place your child goes, for items that may have button batteries. Place them out of reach and sight.
- Some items come with button batteries already installed. Look out for things like: singing greeting cards, watches, thermometers, decorations and flashing jewellery.
- Keep loose batteries locked away.
- As an extra precaution put some duct tape over the battery compartment of the TV remote.



### First aid for a child who has swallowed a button battery

- Time is critical, so children suspected of swallowing a battery must get to an emergency department immediately. Tell the front desk, doctors and nurses that your child might have swallowed a button battery.
  - If you have honey available, give your child 2 teaspoons before heading to the emergency department - as long as they are at least a year old and there is no obvious chest pain or fever. Honey can significantly reduce burn injuries from swallowing button batteries.
  - Two teaspoons can be given every 10 minutes up to 6 doses.
- Do not induce vomiting or have your child eat or drink anything other than honey until a doctor has seen them.
- If you have the identification number of the battery (found on the battery's pack), take it with you to hospital. This could be really helpful to the medical team.
- Call Healthline on 0800 611 116 or Poisons Line on 0800 POISONS (0800 764 766) if you are unsure what to do.

If your child is injured you can find out more about ACC support at [www.acc.co.nz/im-injured](http://www.acc.co.nz/im-injured).  
ACC Claims: 0800 101 996 or email [claims@acc.co.nz](mailto:claims@acc.co.nz).

For detailed references on the data and information contained in this card and to download additional copies visit [www.starship.org.nz/safekids/reference-cards](http://www.starship.org.nz/safekids/reference-cards).