

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Swallowing button batteries is dangerous

Button batteries are used to power items such as watches, cameras, calculators, hearing aids, and computer games. Because of what they look like and their size, children can mistake button batteries for food or candy.

Swallowing button batteries is dangerous. Even if a button battery appears to be dead or expired, it is still dangerous if swallowed.

Serious injury can occur within two hours of the battery being swallowed.

Button batteries can get stuck in your airway and can:

- cause chemical burns
- damage your internal organs

If your child swallows a button battery it can cause burning, corrosion, or completely destroy the tissue in the upper digestive tract. This damage can happen very quickly and is likely to be worse if the battery gets stuck in the esophagus (throat) instead of moving into the stomach.

After swallowing a button battery your child might have one or more of these symptoms:

- trouble breathing

- wheezing, drooling
- coughing and gagging when eating
- trouble swallowing
- chest pain
- belly pain
- nausea, vomiting
- no appetite
- fever

There might not be any symptoms after swallowing a button battery, but injury can still occur.

If you think someone has swallowed a button battery:

- do not try to make them vomit
- take them to an emergency department immediately.