

Choking/Button batteries

Choking

Babies and toddlers can easily swallow, inhale or choke on small items like balloons, batteries, peanuts, buttons, plastic toy pieces, strings or cords.

PREVENTION:

- Check on the floor and under furniture for small items.
- Check that toys are age appropriate and in good condition.
- Find out more about CPR (a first aid technique that is a combination of rescue breaths and chest compressions. Sometimes called the kiss of life).

WHAT TO DO:

If your child is choking act immediately and calmly. Make sure you do not push the object further down the throat. Encourage your child to cough. Use back blows, if they become unconscious call for help (do not leave your child alone) and **start CPR**.

See this link for video information:

www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/my-young-child-is-choking-what-should-i-do.aspx

Button batteries

Why are button batteries dangerous?

Button batteries and lithium coin batteries are the small, round batteries you find in lots of toys and everyday objects. They can be extremely dangerous for children if swallowed - especially lithium coin batteries - and can kill within hours.

Most button batteries pass through the body without a problem. But if a button battery, particularly a lithium coin battery, gets stuck in the throat or gullet, energy from the battery can make the body create caustic soda (the chemical used to unblock drains!). This can burn a hole through the throat and lead to serious internal bleeding and death.

PREVENTION:

- Keep products with batteries well out of reach if the battery compartment isn't secured with a screw.
- Keep all spare batteries out of children's reach and sight, ideally in a high-up, lockable cupboard.
- Avoid toys from markets or temporary shops as they may not conform to safety regulations.
- Teach older children that button batteries are dangerous and not to play with them or give

them to younger brothers and sisters.

WHAT TO DO:

Unfortunately it may not be obvious that a battery is stuck in a child's throat. They may be breathing normally, or simply develop cold or flu-like symptoms. If you suspect your child has swallowed a button battery, act fast.

- Take them straight to the A&E department at your local hospital or **call 999** for an ambulance.
- Tell the doctor there that you think your child has swallowed a button battery.
- Do not let your child eat or drink.
- Do not make them sick.
- Do not wait to see if any symptoms develop.

For advice on CPR and dealing with other injuries www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk

Source: RoSPA