I might swallow a button battery

child accident prevention trust

+BIPBA–
British and Irish Portable Battery Association

Now I'm a toddler

I like to explore things with my mouth

Aims and objectives	Resources	Activity/Session	Outcomes
Recognise how toddlers explore with their mouths and the dangers of swallowing button batteries.	• Resource flash card • Button battery flyer • Ham, 3V button battery (CR2025, CR2032 or CR2330), container with lid (for safe keeping) • Objects with button batteries.	Group discussion of how toddlers like to explore the home environment, the risk of button batteries, including spare and flat batteries, the range of products with them in and battery compartment security.	Learners able to: Understand early development, to recognise dangers of button batteries and how easily toddlers could find them. Risk reduction and what to do if swallowing occurs.

Session notes

Before your session starts

Two hours before, place a 3V lithium coin cell battery (CR2025, CR2032 or CR2330) on a slice of ham in a container, spit on it, then close the lid and put it somewhere safe. Use it to show what happens when a battery gets stuck.

Why are button batteries so dangerous for toddlers?

- Button batteries, especially big, powerful lithium coin cell batteries, can badly hurt or kill a child if they are swallowed and get stuck in the food pipe.
- Toddlers are at risk because they like to explore taste and texture by mouth. They are increasingly dextrous so can get into battery compartments or drawers to find spare or 'flat' batteries.
- Button batteries are in many household items such as car key fobs, key finders, small remote controls, gaming headsets, kitchen and bathroom scales, calculators, children's toys, children's thermometers and musical books and cards.
- Even 'flat' button batteries still have enough charge to badly hurt a child.
- Button batteries can burn a hole through the food pipe and cause catastrophic internal bleeding within 2 hours.

How do I reduce the risk?

- Store spare batteries in sealed containers in a high cupboard.
- Keep objects out of reach if the battery compartment isn't secured with a screw or double-release mechanism.
- Take care buying on-line or from markets or discount stores, as cheap toys may not follow safety regulations.
- Put 'flat' batteries out of reach straight away and recycle or dispose of them safely.

What do you do if you suspect swallowing has occurred?

- There may be no obvious symptoms.
- Don't delay, take them to A&E immediately or dial 999 for an ambulance
- Tell the doctor you think they have swallowed a button battery and take any packaging with you.
- Don't let your child eat or drink anything and do not make them sick.

For more information, visit CAPT's website: www.capt.org.uk/button-batteries