

I might swallow a button battery



Aims and objectives

Recognise how little ones explore with their mouths and the dangers of swallowing button batteries.

Resources

- Button battery flyer
- Button battery poster
- Translated fact sheets
- Ham, 3V button battery, container with lid
- Objects with button batteries.

Activity/Session

Group discussion of how little ones like to explore, the risk of button batteries, the range of products with accessible button batteries and why it's important to hunt for them at home.

Outcomes

Learners able to:
Understand early development, to recognise dangers of button batteries and how easily children can find them. Risk reduction and what to do if swallowing occurs.

Session notes

Before your session starts

Two hours before, place a 3V button battery (CR2025 or CR2032) 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 in a child's food pipe and how quickly damage can occur.

Why are button batteries so dangerous?

- Button batteries, especially big, powerful lithium coin cell batteries, can badly hurt or even kill a child if they are swallowed and get stuck in the food pipe.
- They can burn through to the main artery and cause catastrophic internal bleeding. This can happen very quickly.

- Even 'flat' button batteries still have enough charge to badly hurt a child
- Crawling babies up to pre-schoolers are at most risk as they explore the world by putting things in their mouth.
- With increasing dexterity, toddlers can get into unsecured battery compartments or drawers to find spare or 'flat' batteries.
- Button batteries are in many household items including: small remotes, digital scales, thermometers, nightlights, car key fobs or finders, musical cards and books, light-up toys and novelty items. Once you start looking, you'll be surprised just how many products use button batteries

How do I reduce the risk?

- Hunt around your home for button batteries – in products as well as spare and 'flat' batteries. **Ask parents to tell you what they found where at your next session.**
- Keep products well out of your child's reach if the battery compartment isn't secured.
- Store spare and 'flat' batteries well out of reach too. Recycle 'flat' batteries as quickly as possible.
- Beware of bargains from online marketplaces or local discount stores. They may have button batteries your child can get to easily.

Suspect swallowing has occurred?

- There may be no obvious symptoms.
- Trust your instincts. Don't delay, take them to A&E immediately or dial 999 for an ambulance.
- Tell the doctor you think they may 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.

