

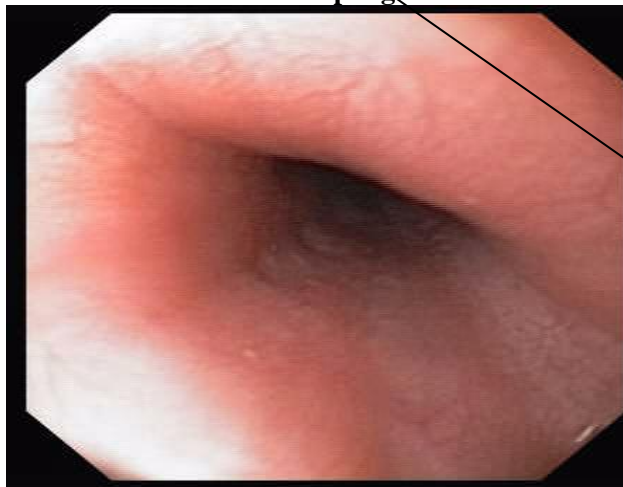
Swallowing Lithium (Button) Batteries is Dangerous!



What is a lithium battery?

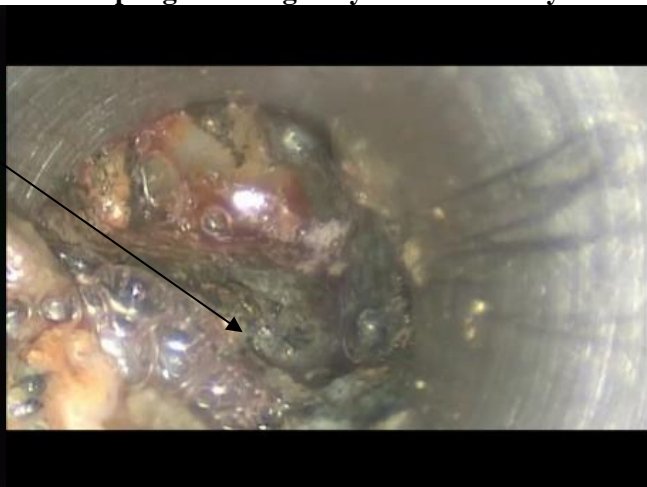
A lithium battery, also known as a **button battery**, is a common product used to power many household items. These batteries are dangerous when children place them in their nose, ears and mouth. The most severe and potentially deadly outcomes occur in children under the age of 3 who have swallowed the largest (20mm) lithium battery. Younger children have a narrow esophagus (feeding tube from the mouth to the stomach). This increases the chance for the battery to become stuck. Damage can occur in less than 2 hours after the battery is swallowed.

Normal esophagus



Reprint Permission: Petar Mamula MD (2013)

Esophagus damaged by lithium battery



Reprint Permission: Adele Evans MD (2013)

25:B:29

What are some of the products that contain button batteries?

Remote controls, toys, garage door openers, car keys, electric candles, toothbrushes, bathroom scales, baby monitors, watches, hearing aids, portable stereos, flashing shoes and jewelry, some musical books and cell phones.

What are the signs that my child has swallowed a button battery?

You may notice a sudden onset of crying (some children may not be in pain), drooling, decreased eating or drinking, difficulty swallowing, hoarse voice, vomiting, chest pain or discomfort, abdominal pain, blood in saliva and stool. Children often swallow these batteries without anyone noticing. The above symptoms can also be mistaken for another diagnosis. Parents or caretakers should know that these batteries can be found anywhere in the home and think of it as a possibility if a child is in distress.

What should I do if I think my child has swallowed a battery?

This is an emergency! Take your child to an Emergency Department, ideally one in a Children's Hospital, immediately.

Is there anything I should not do if I think my child has swallowed a battery?

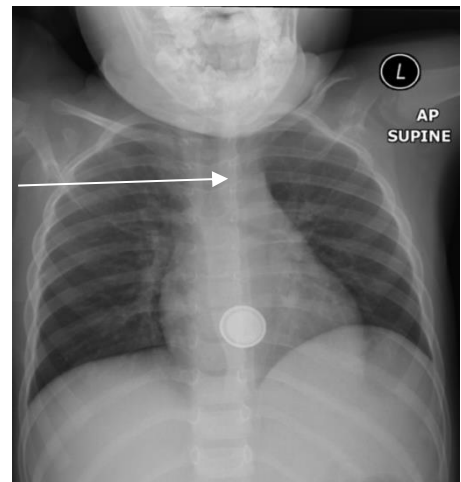
Do not give medications to make your child move his bowels or vomit. Do not give your child anything to eat or drink. Do not give milk; this will not prevent further injury. Even if you saw your child swallow the battery, do not attempt the Heimlich maneuver. The battery could get stuck in another area or change its location and increase the risk of injury.

How will the doctors know whether my child swallowed a button battery?

The doctors in the emergency room will take a chest X-ray, abdominal X-ray, or both. If your child swallowed a button battery, the doctors will be able to see the disc shape on X-ray with a halo or circle around the edge.

What will the doctors do next?

The doctor will notify an Ear/Nose and Throat specialist, General Surgeon or a Gastroenterologist (doctor who cares for patients with problems of the digestive system). Your child may need to be taken to the operating room and the battery may need to be removed by one of these physicians using a special scope. They will check to see if anything in your child's body was damaged by the battery. If the battery was stuck in the esophagus, your child will need to stay in the hospital for more testing.



If your child swallowed a large 20mm button battery, there is a higher risk for damage to his body. Your child may need surgery to get the battery out and repair the damage. This would be done by a general surgeon sometimes along with an Ear, Nose, and Throat surgeon in the operating room. **This is an emergency.**

What happens after the battery is removed?

We will give you detailed instructions to care for your child. Experts have shown that batteries stuck in the esophagus can continue to cause injury even after removal. When your child is ready to go home, follow your doctors instructions carefully and call your doctor with any questions or concerns. Keep all appointments even if your child has no further symptoms. This is important for your child's safety; we want to be sure he is not having any complications.

What are the signs that my child might be having complications?

Pay attention to fever, chest pain, appearing pale/sweaty, dizziness, fatigue, blood in secretions. **Return to the hospital immediately if any of these symptoms occur.**

How can I prevent my child from swallowing a button battery?

Keep batteries out of reach and sight. Make sure all compartments that hold batteries are locked. Have the Battery Ingestion Hotline number available: 202-625-3333.

Where can I get more information?

<http://thebatterycontrolled.com>