

# Safe and secure...



Advice to help you prevent children from swallowing button batteries and other products that could cause them harm.

## What are button batteries?

- Button batteries – also known as button cell batteries, or coin batteries - are small flat circular batteries that are used to power many objects around the home
- Button batteries come in various sizes but most are 1 to 2cm in diameter. This means that they are of a similar size and shape to some sweets so can be easily swallowed
- They are extremely dangerous to children if swallowed.

## Where will you find button batteries within the home?

Button batteries are used to power many objects around the home including:



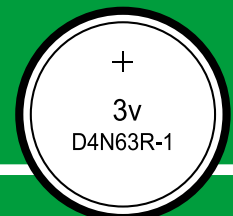
## How do I keep my child Safe?



- ✓ Look around your home for items containing button batteries
- ✓ Check battery compartments are secure
- ✓ Toys are legally required to have lockable compartments but checks should be done to make sure they are secure
- ✓ Other products are not legally required to have lockable compartments so these items should be moved high out of reach and sight of young children
- ✓ Only buy toys and other equipment from reliable sources – they are more likely to have passed safety regulations
- ✓ Keep new batteries in their original blister packaging, preferably high up out of reach or in a locked cupboard
- ✓ When a battery has run out of power it still has some charge that can cause damage if swallowed. Dispose of it safely straight away if you can, but make sure any used batteries are kept well out of reach of children.

## What should you do if you think your child has swallowed a button battery?

- These batteries can cause serious internal damage. When combined with saliva, the electrical current from the battery produces caustic soda that can burn through the throat or stomach and can cause further damage to other internal organs
- If you suspect your child has swallowed a button battery, you should take them to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department immediately
- Do not give your child anything to eat or drink or try to make them sick. If possible, try to find out what kind of battery your child swallowed but do not delay taking them to hospital if you cannot immediately see what they have swallowed.



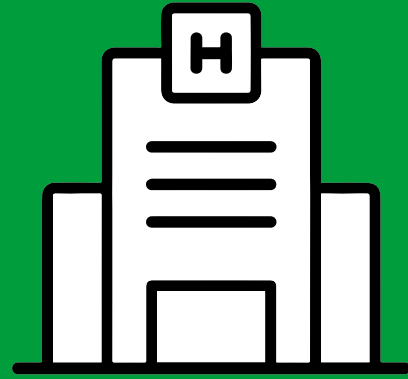
## Batteries...

Take care when changing batteries to make sure the compartment is secured afterwards and the old battery is kept out of reach of children until it can be disposed of safely.

Batteries should not be put in the household rubbish. Check the disposal arrangements in your area. Many supermarkets have battery disposal bins.

# Signs to look out for...

Great Ormond Street Hospital has provided helpful information about the signs you can look for:



1. **Vomiting fresh, bright red blood. If your child does that, you absolutely have to get them immediate medical help.**

## Other symptoms can include:

2. Suddenly developing a cough, gag or drooling a lot
3. Appearing to have a stomach upset or a virus
4. Being sick
5. Pointing to their throat or stomach
6. Having a pain in their tummy, chest or throat
7. Being tired or lethargic
8. Being quieter or more clingy than usual or otherwise “not themselves”
9. Losing their appetite or have a reduced appetite
10. Not wanting to eat solid food/be unable to eat solid food.



## Other poisoning and ingestion risks

Check your home for items that should be kept out of the sight and reach of young children. **These include:**

- Magnets sometimes called 'Buckyballs' can be found in:
  - Toys
  - Fake tongue piercings and other gadgets
- The magnets can attract one another through the stomach and intestinal walls, causing punctures in the stomach and intestinal walls leading to abdominal obstructions and lifelong digestive disorders
- Household cleaning products should always be stored in their original containers. Replace lids and put all products away immediately after use
- Dispose of unwanted household cleaning products safely
- Use household cleaning products according to label directions and remember that mixing household products can cause dangerous gases to form
- Please remember to choose age appropriate toys for younger children as toys for older children may contain small parts
- The majority of hospital admissions from accidental poisoning are from children swallowing medication. Please make sure that all medication is stored in a lockable cupboard out of the reach of children.



For more information please visit the home safety pages on RoSPA's website at...

[www.rospa.com/safe-fashion](http://www.rospa.com/safe-fashion)  
[www.rospa.com/safe-and-secure](http://www.rospa.com/safe-and-secure)