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News story

New button battery safety campaign

OPSS is again raising awareness of the potential hazards posed to children by button batteries, which have become commonplace in our homes.

From:

[Office for Product Safety and Standards \(/government/organisations/office-for-product-safety-and-standards\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-product-safety-and-standards)

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Working with The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, the Child Accident Prevention Trust, and the British and Irish Portable Battery Association, OPSS has produced safety messages on how to keep children safe.

Button batteries are used to power everyday items including car key fobs, remotes, and children's toys – but if swallowed, they could badly injure or kill a child.

Button batteries react with saliva to create caustic soda, which is the chemical often used to unblock drains. If a child swallows a button battery and it gets stuck in their food pipe (oesophagus), it can burn a hole and cause internal bleeding, or even death. If a button battery gets into the stomach, it can also cause significant tissue damage.

Larger lithium 'coin cell' batteries (about the size of a five pence piece) are the most dangerous. Smaller batteries can be inserted into places such as ears and noses, causing serious injuries for children if undetected.

Store spare batteries securely

Store spare button batteries securely and out of children's reach. Be careful when opening multi-packs of button batteries to ensure they do not fall on the floor.

Know what products use button batteries

Ensure that you know what gadgets and toys use button batteries and check that the button battery compartment is secure. Put products with unsecured button batteries out of children's reach. Under product safety regulations, button battery compartments in toys are required to be secured.

Educate older children about button batteries

Communicate with older children about the dangers of button batteries including why they should not play with them or give them to younger children.

Discard dead button batteries straightaway

Dead button batteries can still have enough power to badly hurt a small child. When you remove a button battery, store it securely, and recycle it properly and promptly.

Act promptly if you suspect a child has swallowed a button battery

If you think your child has swallowed a button battery, take them straight to the nearest A&E department or call 999 for an ambulance. Take the battery packaging, toy, or gadget if you can to help staff identify the battery. Symptoms may not be obvious. Your child might be coughing, gagging, or drooling, or pointing to their throat or tummy. Unclear or fluctuating symptoms mean it is important to be vigilant. Do not let your child eat or drink or make your child be sick.

Groups, businesses, and individuals are encouraged to support the button batteries safety messages by retweeting and posting them on social media, using the hashtag #buttonbatteries, or using the shared campaign materials.

The campaign materials can be downloaded from the [consumer safety awareness campaigns materials GOV.UK page \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/consumer-safety-awareness-campaigns-materials\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/consumer-safety-awareness-campaigns-materials)

More information about our partners and button batteries

[The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents \(https://www.rosipa.com/home-safety/advice/product/button-batteries\)](https://www.rosipa.com/home-safety/advice/product/button-batteries)

[The Child Accident Prevention Trust \(https://www.capt.org.uk/button-battery-safety\)](https://www.capt.org.uk/button-battery-safety)

[The Chartered Trading Standards Institute \(https://www.tradingstandards.uk/news-policy/campaigns/button-battery-campaign\)](https://www.tradingstandards.uk/news-policy/campaigns/button-battery-campaign)

[The British and Irish Portable Battery Association \(https://bipba.co.uk/aboutus_battery-safety.html\)](https://bipba.co.uk/aboutus_battery-safety.html)

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