

BUTTON BATTERY SAFETY ADVICE FOR FAMILIES AND SETTINGS

Children's Services and Skills Directorate
SEND 0-25 Service
Specialist Inclusion Support Service
Sensory and Physical Impairment Team



Coin or button batteries are often used in hearing aids and cochlear implants. Due to their size and a child's tendency to explore items by putting things in their mouths, nose and or ears, they can be dangerous.

Disposable button batteries that are found in hearing devices are called 'zinc-air' button batteries and look like this:



Button batteries are also found in a range of toys, remote controls, car keys, greetings cards and small electronic devices.

What are the dangers?

Although a child may not choke, if undetected the batteries can do serious damage to the gastrointestinal system. When combined with saliva, the electrical current from the battery produces caustic soda that burns through the throat or stomach and can cause further damage to other internal organs.

What should I do if I believe my child might have/had swallowed a button battery or put in nose/ear?

- Don't panic
- Seek medical advice immediately/take them straight to A&E
 - ** Remember that the saliva in their body will react with the battery and so time is very much of the essence in these cases.
- Tell the Doctor what you believe has happened and if you have the packet take it with you
- Do not let the child eat or drink
- Do not make them sick

**** Injury can occur in as short a time as one - two hours. Full-thickness burns can occur in four hours. (E-medical January 20)**

Trust your instincts and act fast – do not wait to see if any symptoms develop.

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What precautions can I take to protect my child?

Ensure the child's hearing aids, bone conduction devices for ALL children under five year's old and older children with additional difficulties have with secure (tamper resistant) battery compartments. These should also be considered for older children living with others who fall into these groups. Also for Cochlear implant disposable batteries should they be being used.

Your Audiologist or Teacher of the Deaf, can show you how to use the tamper resistant battery compartment.

Battery safety at home/in setting:

- Ensure a child's tamper resistant battery compartment is securely closed before putting on a hearing device
- Store devices securely/out of reach when battery compartment is not secure (that is when they are turned off)
- Lock away spare batteries out of reach
- Dispose of used batteries correctly - once they are dead, store them securely out of reach, and then recycle them as soon as possible.
- Know which other devices/toys have button batteries in around the home/setting
- Teach older children button batteries are dangerous and not to play with them or give them to younger brother or sisters