



Child safety update

February 2015

The issue

- If ingested, button batteries can cause serious harm and death. Even batteries that appear to be discharged ('flat') can be harmful.
- Button battery ingestion can happen in all age groups, although most cases involve children under the age of six who mistake the battery for a sweet, or older people with confusion or poor vision who mistake the battery for a pill.
- Older children and adults may ingest batteries as a means of self-harming.

The action

- PHE centres are asked to pass on this information and encourage local authorities to raise awareness of the dangers among early years settings and members of the workforce who come into contact with families with babies and young children.
- The Start4Life Information Service for Parents is being reviewed to ensure that information on the dangers of button batteries is clearly signposted.
- The director of nursing for PHE and DH will also raise awareness of the issue among health visitors and school nurses.

Further sources of information:

- NHS England has sent out a [patient safety alert](#) on button batteries to NHS providers.
- The Child Accident Prevention Trust has advice on its [website](#).
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) also has advice on its [website](#).
- Parents in the US have set up a [website](#) to share their personal stories and highlight the dangers.
- For further information contact Alison.burton@phe.gov.uk

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