***Newsletter/Blog Article***

**Powering Childhood Injury: Button Battery Burns**

“I didn’t know he had swallowed something.”

“I don’t know where she even got it!”

If you’re a parent or take care of children, this is a feeling you probably already know. No matter how prepared we feel, it seems that children are experts at getting to the little things we’ve overlooked or don’t think they can access. Found in almost every home, button batteries—coin-sized batteries—fall neatly into that category.

Many parents believe that button batteries are only a choking hazard, but they can actually cause serious internal burns when they’re swallowed or stuck in the nose or ears. The battery’s charge can burn a hole through body tissue in as little as two hours. In many cases, no one sees the child swallow the battery, so the damage could be done even before you realize that your child is in danger. Serious injury, including the need for major surgeries, and death can occur, making prevention critical.

So how can we protect our children around button batteries? Keeping children from accessing the batteries at all is the best way to keep them safer. Many children get button batteries from products designed for adults or find spare or old batteries, so experts recommend the following tips to prevent this type of injury from happening to your family.

* Store all batteries out of sight and reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet or container.
* Do not allow children to play with new or used batteries.
* Buy products with a secure battery compartment that requires a tool (often a screwdriver) to open. Check these compartments often to make sure they stay secure over time.
* When replacing batteries, immediately throw away old batteries in a trash can that children cannot access or put batteries for recycling out of sight and reach.
* Check other homes your children visit for possible access to button batteries: grandparents, family members, caregivers, and friends.

If you suspect that your child has swallowed a battery, immediately go to the nearest emergency department. Don’t wait for symptoms to develop. Contact the National Battery Ingestion Hotline at 202-625-3333 for guidance.