Not cute as a button: Babes and button batteries

In a couple of weeks my 16 month old nephew will visit my non-baby proofed house. Chances are, he will find things in my house to chew on besides turkey. The first items I am hiding are the devices which contain the tiny round batteries called button batteries. Below, Kristen Casavale of The Battery Controlled reminds us about the hidden hazards of button batteries.

Electronic devices are a part of daily life. And they're getting smaller, slimmer and sleeker. But inside the battery compartment of mini remote controls, small calculators, watches, key fobs, flameless candles, singing greeting cards, and other electronics, is a very powerful coin-sized button battery. When swallowed, these batteries can get stuck in the throat and food pipe, causing severe burns in as few as two hours.

"Our trauma surgeon told us that they see 10 ingestions a month. Unfortunately, I didn't really think twice about Emmett playing with the remote control," said Karla Rausch, mom of son Emmett, age two.

Small children often have easy access to these devices; parents often don't know about the risk, and little ones can't always communicate with adults. Grown-ups may be unaware of an ingestion until the battery starts to erode through a child's food pipe. The Battery Controlled is a partnership to raise awareness about the severity of the issue and share information with parents, caregivers and the medical community. Launched by Energizer and Safe Kids USA, this effort is committed to helping parents prevent children from swallowing coin-sized button batteries.

Teaching points for parents:

1. Keep out of reach. Devices with coin lithium “button” batteries have no place in unsupervised hands or toy boxes.
2. Get help fast. Life-threatening damage can happen in as few as 2 hours.
3. Tell others.

We, and my nephew, thank Kristen for her safety alert.

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