



An Extended Guide · No. 1988

# Button Batteries & Grandkids: A Safety Check for Your House

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Where they hide, how to secure them,  
and what to do if one is swallowed

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**! If a button battery is swallowed, it is an emergency — act now**

A swallowed coin or button battery can burn through the throat in as little as two hours, so do not wait to see what happens. Call the Poison Control hotline right away, day or night, at 1-800-222-1222 — it is free and staffed around the clock — or call 911. If the child is at least 12 months old, can swallow, and it has been under 12 hours, give two teaspoons of honey every 10 minutes (up to six times) on the way to the emergency room. Do NOT make the child throw up and do NOT give anything else to eat or drink. Get to the emergency room for an X-ray even if the child seems fine.

## A little check that can prevent a terrible day

If little ones visit your home — grandkids, great-grandkids, the neighbor's children — this is one of the most worthwhile half-hours you can spend. Button batteries are tiny, shiny, and genuinely dangerous when swallowed, and most homes have more of them than you'd guess.

I'm Bill, and I run Bill's Home Tech here in Portage County, Ohio. I write these guides to make home tech less worrying, and this one matters to me. The good news is that keeping kids safe from button batteries comes down to a few simple habits you can set up today.

We'll walk your house room by room, find where these little batteries hide, make them hard for small hands to reach, and — most important — make sure you know exactly what to do in the rare, frightening case that one is swallowed.

**★ I'll do this walk-through with you**

This is a perfect visit: together we'll find every coin battery in the house, secure the risky gadgets, and post the emergency steps on your fridge. Call or text (330) 200-8042 — peace of mind is worth a half-hour.

## Why a tiny battery is such a big danger

It helps to understand the 'why,' because it makes the urgency real — and it's not the same danger as choking.

A button or coin battery — the flat, round, silver kind in a car key fob, a thin remote, or a greeting card that plays music — can be swallowed easily by a small child. If it lodges in the throat, it doesn't just sit there. An electrical current forms where it touches the moist tissue, and that current can burn through the throat in as little as two hours.

That's why this is treated as an emergency even if the child seems perfectly fine at first. The injury happens on the inside, quickly and quietly. The bigger, more powerful coin batteries — about the size of a nickel — are the most dangerous of all.

### **! Seeming fine does not mean safe**

A child who has swallowed a button battery may not choke, cough, or cry. They can look and act normal while serious harm is beginning. Never 'wait and see' — call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 right away.

## If a battery is swallowed: the steps, in order

Read this now, while it's calm, so it's already in your head if you ever need it. Post it on the fridge, too.

- ❑ **Call Poison Control right away: 1-800-222-1222.** Free, 24 hours a day. Or call 911.
- ❑ **If the child is 12 months or older**, can swallow, and it's been under 12 hours: give **2 teaspoons of honey every 10 minutes**, up to 6 times, on the way to the emergency room.
- ❑ **Do NOT make the child vomit** and do NOT give anything else to eat or drink.
- ❑ **Go to the emergency room** for an X-ray even if the child seems fine.
- ❑ **For a battery in the nose or ear**, same hotline — it needs urgent removal too.

### ! About the honey

Honey can slow the burn while you get to the hospital, but it's a bridge, not a cure — you still go straight to the ER. And never give honey to a baby under 12 months; for them, just go, and let Poison Control guide you on the phone.

## Where button batteries hide in a typical home

The first step is simply knowing where to look. You'll be surprised how many of these are scattered around.

- **Car key fobs** and garage-door remotes.
- **Thin TV, soundbar, and fan remotes**, and small universal remotes.
- **Greeting cards and books that play music or light up.**
- **Bathroom scales, kitchen scales, and meat thermometers.**
- **Hearing aids** and their spare-battery packs.
- **Watches, fitness trackers, and small clocks.**
- **Flameless candles, small flashlights, and night lights.**
- **Key finders and item trackers, toys, and novelty gadgets.**

### ✓ The loose ones are the worst

A battery sealed inside a gadget is far safer than a loose one. The real danger spots are the junk drawer, a dish of spare batteries, and the little packet of replacements — those are the ones to lock away first.

## Your room-by-room safety check

Here's the half-hour walk I'd do with you. Take a small box to collect any loose batteries as you go.

**Living room:** gather every remote and check that each battery door is closed and snug. Pick up musical cards and light-up decorations. **Kitchen:** scales, thermometers, timers, and the junk drawer where spares collect. **Bathroom:** the scale, and anyone's hearing-aid batteries. **Bedrooms and office:** watches, clocks, trackers, small flashlights, and that dish of 'might need these' batteries.

As you go, put every loose or spare battery into your box. Those are going to a locked, high spot. Gadgets stay where they are for now — we'll secure the risky ones on the next page.

### ★ Make it a regular habit

Do this check when you first child-proof, and again before the holidays when new gadgets and musical cards arrive. If you'd like a second set of eyes, that's exactly what I'm for — call (330) 200-8042.

## Making the risky gadgets safe

You don't have to throw anything out. Most gadgets can be made child-safe in a minute or two.

The safest gadgets have a battery door that needs a screw or a coin to open — those are hard for little hands. The risky ones have a door that pops open with a fingernail, or a tray that slides out easily. For those, a small piece of strong tape over the battery door is a simple, effective fix, and you can still get in when you need to.

If a remote or toy has a door that's lost its little screw or won't latch, tape it shut or set it well out of reach until it's fixed. And when you replace a battery, make sure the door clicks fully closed before the gadget goes back on the coffee table.

### ✓ Watch the ones that break open when dropped

A remote that flies apart when it hits the floor can scatter a battery right where a crawler will find it. Those are good candidates for a strip of tape over the door, especially in rooms where little ones play.

## Storing and tossing spare batteries safely

Loose spares — new and dead alike — are the highest risk. Both deserve a safe home out of reach.

Keep new button batteries in their original sealed packaging, in a high, closed, child-proof spot — not a low junk drawer and not loose in a dish. A used button battery is still dangerous: it can hold enough charge to cause a serious burn, so treat dead ones with the same care as new ones.

When it's time to get rid of dead coin batteries, don't just drop them in a drawer or an open trash can where a child could fish one out. Put a piece of tape over each one and take them to a battery-recycling drop-off, or follow your local rules.

### **! Dead does not mean harmless**

People assume a 'dead' battery is safe — it isn't. A used coin cell often has plenty of charge left to injure a child. Store and dispose of spent ones just as carefully as fresh ones.

## Signs a child may have swallowed one

Because a child can seem fine, the surest clue is often a missing battery. But there are symptoms to know, too.

If you find a gadget open with its battery gone, or a packet short a battery, and a small child has been nearby — treat it as swallowed and call Poison Control, even with no symptoms. Don't wait for proof.

Symptoms, when they come, can look like other illnesses: drooling, trouble or pain swallowing, refusing food, coughing or gagging, chest or tummy pain, wheezing, or a fever with no clear cause. Any of these in a child who could have reached a battery is a reason to call right away.

### **! When in doubt, call — it's free and immediate**

You never need to be sure before you call 1-800-222-1222. The experts there would far rather talk you through a false alarm than have you wait. There is no wrong time to call Poison Control about a battery.

## Two kinds of households, two sets of needs

The risk looks a little different depending on how often children are around — but every home with any button batteries is worth checking.

### If grandkids visit now and then

Your home isn't set up for children day to day, which is exactly why it's easy to overlook. Visits are when the risk spikes.

- Do the room-by-room check before the first visit, not during it.
- Keep a 'grandkid-safe' standard in the rooms where they play and nap.
- Post the emergency steps and the Poison Control number on the fridge.
- Give a quick glance after each visit for dropped or opened gadgets.

### If children live with you or visit often

With little ones around constantly, you want safe habits baked in so nothing slips through on a busy day.

- Make taped battery doors and high, locked spares the normal routine.
- Check new toys, cards, and gadgets as they come into the house.
- Teach older kids that these batteries are never toys.
- Keep the emergency steps somewhere everyone who babysits can see them.

#### ★ Let's make your home grandkid-safe

Whether the little ones visit twice a year or live down the hall, I'm glad to walk the house with you, secure the gadgets, and post the emergency steps where you'll find them. Call (330) 200-8042.

## The one thing to put on your fridge today

If you do nothing else from this guide, do this. It takes two minutes and it's the piece that saves time in a frightening moment.

Write, or print, a simple card and stick it on the fridge where anyone — you, your spouse, a visiting relative, a babysitter — can grab it. It should say: 'Button battery swallowed? Call Poison Control now: 1-800-222-1222. If 12 months or older, give 2 teaspoons honey every 10 minutes on the way to the ER. Do not make them vomit. Go to the ER.'

In an emergency, nobody wants to be hunting through a drawer for a guide. A card on the fridge means the right steps are right there, the instant you need them.

### ✓ Put the number in your phone, too

Save Poison Control — 1-800-222-1222 — as a contact in your phone, and have your grown children and anyone who babysits save it as well. One tap beats scrambling.

## More about the honey step

Folks often have questions about the honey, so let's be clear and accurate about what it is and isn't.

Giving honey became a recommended first-aid step because it can coat a swallowed coin battery and slow the chemical burn while you travel to the hospital. The guidance is specific: only if the child is at least 12 months old, can swallow safely, and it's been less than 12 hours — then 2 teaspoons every 10 minutes, up to 6 doses, on the way to the ER.

Honey does not replace the emergency room, and it isn't for babies under a year. If you don't have honey handy, don't delay the trip to go buy it — getting to the hospital and calling Poison Control come first.

### **! Honey is a bridge, not a fix**

The battery still has to come out, and only a hospital can do that. Think of honey as buying a little time on the way, nothing more. Call Poison Control and go.

## Toys, gifts, and the holidays

New gadgets pour into a home around birthdays and the holidays — and so do new button batteries. A little awareness keeps the fun safe.

Musical cards, light-up ornaments, small toys, flameless candles, and novelty gifts very often run on coin batteries, sometimes behind a flimsy door. When new things arrive, give them the same quick check: is the battery door screwed or taped shut, or does it pop open easily?

Children's toys sold by reputable makers usually have properly secured battery doors by law, but cheap novelties and adult gadgets often don't. Those are the ones to watch when they land on the coffee table.

### ✓ Open new gadgets away from little hands

Unbox and set up new battery gadgets when children aren't underfoot, and gather the packaging and any loose spare batteries straight into your high, locked spot.

## A quick word about pets

It isn't only children. Curious dogs, in particular, swallow button batteries too, and it's just as dangerous for them.

The same burns can happen inside a pet, and the same urgency applies. If you think a dog or cat has swallowed a button battery, call your veterinarian or an animal poison hotline right away — don't wait to see how they do.

The same habits protect everyone: keep loose and spare batteries out of reach, secure wobbly battery doors, and pick up dropped gadgets promptly. A battery on the floor is a hazard to whoever finds it first.

### ✓ Keep the vet's number handy too

Alongside Poison Control on your fridge, jot your vet's after-hours number. The same quick-reach principle applies — a frightening moment is no time to go searching.

## Common mistakes that let these slip through

A few understandable assumptions are what usually leave a gap. Now you'll spot them.

- **Assuming dead batteries are safe** — used coin cells still burn.
- **Keeping spares in a low junk drawer** instead of high and locked.
- **Trusting a flimsy battery door** that pops open when dropped.
- **Waiting to 'see if the child is okay'** instead of calling at once.
- **Forgetting the adult gadgets** — scales, fobs, hearing aids, trackers — while focusing only on toys.
- **Not telling babysitters** where the emergency steps are.

### **! The costliest mistake is waiting**

Every other mistake here is about prevention. The one that does the real harm is hesitating after a battery is swallowed. If there's any chance, call 1-800-222-1222 immediately and head for the ER.

## Which batteries this is about

Let's be clear about which batteries carry this particular danger, so you know what you're looking for.

The concern is the flat, round 'coin' or 'button' battery — the thin silver disc, often marked with a code starting with letters like CR or LR and some numbers. The larger lithium coin cells, roughly nickel-sized, are the most dangerous because they carry more energy. Our coin-and-button-battery guide explains reading those codes if you need to replace one.

Ordinary cylinder batteries — AA, AAA, C, D, and the rectangular 9-volt — are a choking and leaking concern but don't cause the same throat burns. Still, keep all loose batteries away from small children; none of them belong in little mouths.

### ✓ If you're not sure what size you found

Any flat, round, coin-shaped battery should be treated as the dangerous kind. When you need to identify or replace one safely, our guide on coin and button batteries walks you through the codes.

## Getting the whole family on the same page

Safety sticks best when everyone knows the plan — not just the one person who read the guide.

Share the emergency steps with your spouse, your grown children, and anyone who watches the little ones. A quick group text with the Poison Control number and the honey rule means every caregiver is ready, whether the kids are at your house or theirs.

It's also worth a kind word to the grandkids' parents about the gadgets in their own home — fobs, cards, trackers, and cheap novelties are everywhere. This guide is easy to pass along.

### ★ Share this guide freely

Adult kids forward Bill's guides to their parents all the time, but this one is worth sending the other direction too — to the young parents in your family. It's free, and it might matter enormously someday.

## Your quick reference

The whole guide, boiled down — prevention on top, the emergency at the bottom.

- ❑ Find every loose and spare button battery; store them high and locked.
- ❑ Tape shut any battery door that pops open easily.
- ❑ Treat dead coin batteries as dangerous — tape and recycle them.
- ❑ Check new gadgets, toys, and musical cards as they arrive.
- ❑ Post the emergency steps on the fridge and save the number in your phone.
- ❑ Swallowed? Call Poison Control 1-800-222-1222 now. Honey if over 12 months and under 12 hours. Don't induce vomiting. Go to the ER.

### ★ Keep this page where you'll find it

Tuck these pages somewhere handy and post the fridge card today. If you'd like help setting it all up, I'm one call away at (330) 200-8042.

## Common Questions

The questions I hear most from grandparents, answered plainly.

### **Q: How fast do I really need to act?**

Immediately. A coin battery can begin burning the throat in as little as two hours, and a child may show no symptoms at first. Call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 the moment you suspect it, and go to the ER.

### **Q: What if I'm not sure the child swallowed one?**

Treat it as if they did. If a battery is missing from a gadget or packet and a child was nearby, call 1-800-222-1222 — the experts would far rather reassure you than have you wait for proof.

### **Q: Is the honey really safe to give?**

For a child 12 months or older who can swallow, within 12 hours, yes — 2 teaspoons every 10 minutes, up to 6 times, on the way to the hospital. Never give honey to a baby under a year; for them, just go and let Poison Control guide you.

### **Q: Aren't dead batteries harmless?**

No. A used coin battery often holds enough charge to cause a serious burn. Store and dispose of spent ones just as carefully as new ones — taped, and out of reach.

### **Q: Which gadgets are the biggest risk?**

The ones with loose or flimsy battery doors, and any loose spares. Key fobs, thin remotes, musical cards, scales, and hearing aids are common culprits — and the junk drawer full of spares most of all.

### **★ Want help making your home safe?**

This is one of the most meaningful visits I do. Call or text (330) 200-8042 and we'll button up every battery in the house together.

## A reassuring word to end on

I don't want to leave you frightened — I want to leave you ready. There's a big difference.

Button batteries are dangerous, but they're also entirely manageable once you know the two halves of the job: keep them out of little hands, and know the emergency steps cold. You've now done both just by reading this. That puts your home far ahead of most.

Do the room check this week, post the fridge card today, and share the steps with your family. Then enjoy the grandkids' visits with one less worry in the back of your mind.

### ✓ Small habits, big protection

High, locked spares. Taped-shut doors. A card on the fridge. Three small habits that, together, take a scary risk and make it very unlikely — and very survivable if it ever happens.

## Two things to do today

While it's fresh, take care of the two steps that matter most.

First, write and post the fridge card with the Poison Control number and the honey rule, and save 1-800-222-1222 in your phone. Second, gather every loose and spare button battery you can find into one box and move it somewhere high and closed. Those two steps alone transform your home's safety.

The full room-by-room check and the taped doors can follow this weekend. But the fridge card and the gathered spares are today's job — they're quick, and they're the ones that count most.

### ★ Need a hand getting started?

If you'd like company for the walk-through, or help writing the fridge card, that's exactly the kind of visit I love. Call (330) 200-8042.

## Where this guidance comes from

Because this is a safety matter, I want to be plain about the source of the emergency steps.

The emergency guidance here — the Poison Control number, the honey rule, and the 'don't wait, go to the ER' message — follows the national poison-control guidance for swallowed coin batteries. I've kept it word-for-word rather than paraphrasing, because in an emergency the details matter.

If you ever reach Poison Control and their advice differs from what's written here — because of the child's age, the timing, or something I can't know — follow the experts on the phone. They have the full picture. This guide is here to get you to them fast and ready.

### **! The experts on the line always win**

This guide gets you moving in the right direction. Once you have Poison Control or the ER on the line, their instructions for your specific situation come first, every time.

## You don't have to do this alone

You just have to remember that a friendly, patient person is one call away.

I hope this guide made keeping your home safe from button batteries feel a little less daunting and a lot more doable. Keep it in a drawer with your other home papers, come back to a page whenever you need it, and don't worry about memorizing anything.

When you'd rather have a hand, that's exactly what I do. I come to your home, work at your pace, and never make you feel rushed or silly for asking. A first visit is a flat \$99, and for the parts that don't need me on-site I can often help right on your screen for \$49. Every visit comes with a 30-day, come-back-free guarantee. I don't do licensed electrical, gas, or appliance-repair work myself — for that I'll help you line up a trustworthy local pro.

### ★ Bill's Home Tech — real help, close to home

Call or text me at (330) 200-8042, or visit BillsHomeTech.com. Serving Atwater and all of Portage County. 30+ years of patient, plain-English tech help — and if you're ever not 100% happy with a visit, I'll make it right or refund it. That's a promise. — Bill

# If a Battery Is Swallowed

The steps, in order -- post these on your fridge



A coin battery can burn the throat in as little as two hours.

## Where Button Batteries Hide

Walk the house and check each of these

| Room        |                  | Common gadgets |
|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| Living room | Remotes,         | musical cards  |
| Kitchen     | Scales, timers,  | junk drawer    |
| Bathroom    | Scale, hearing-  | aid batteries  |
| Bedroom     | Watches, clocks, | trackers       |

Loose spares are the highest risk -- store them high and locked.

Safe or Risky?

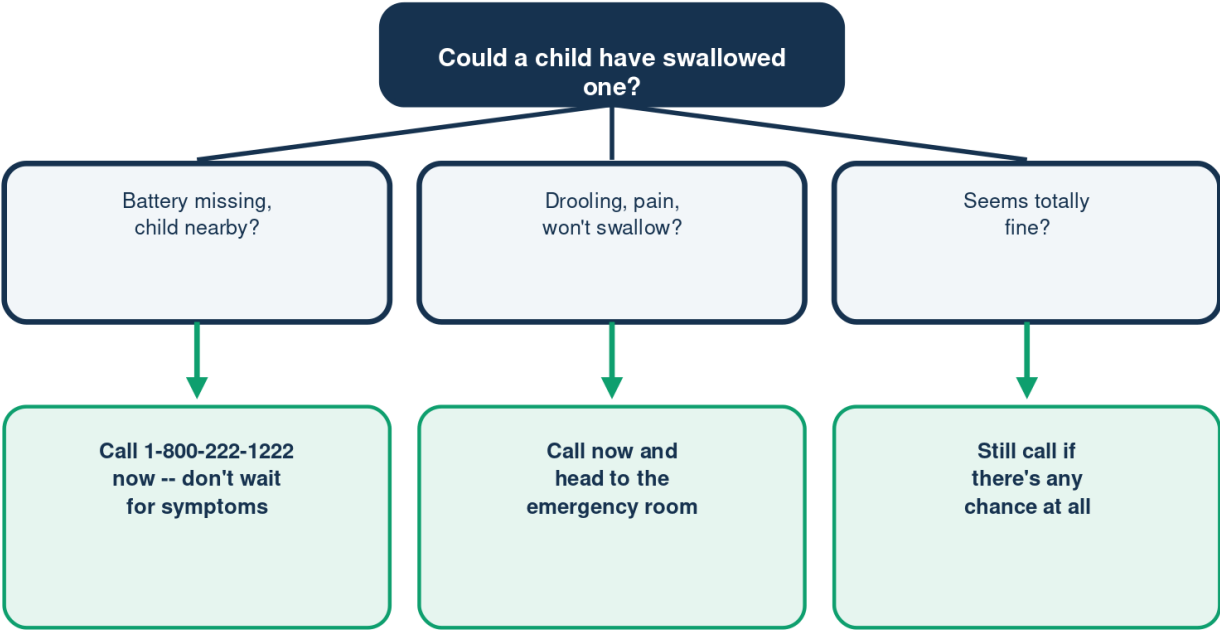
Judging a gadget's battery door

|              | Safer           | Riskier          |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| The door     | Needs a screw   | Pops with a nail |
| When dropped | Stays shut      | Flies open       |
| Spares       | Sealed, high up | Loose in a dish  |
| Dead cells   | Taped, recycled | Tossed in drawer |

A strip of strong tape fixes most flimsy battery doors.

# Do You Need to Call?

When in doubt, the answer is yes



There is no wrong time to call Poison Control about a battery.

Illustration - a schematic, not to scale. Your setup may differ.



## Need a Real Person?

You do not have to remember all of it.  
You just have to remember you can call.  
Friendly, in-home tech help -- I come to you.

### BILL'S PROMISE

If you are not 100% happy with a visit, I will make it right -- or refund it. No awkwardness, no fine print. That is how I would want to be treated.

**(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com**

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— Bill

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### Prefer help without a visit?

Bill can screen-share and fix many things remotely — a flat \$49, free for Support Plan members.



## A Note From Bill

### A quick note from Bill.

I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that comes from using these guides. Thanks for reading, and stay safe out there.

— *Bill*



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