

Flameless candle batteries pose risk to kids

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Flameless Candles

(HealthDay)—Tiny button batteries that light up flameless "tea candles" pose a significant risk to children when swallowed, the National Capital Poison Center warns.

The [lithium batteries](#) in the candles accounted for 14 percent of all the button batteries swallowed by children over the last two years, the center reported. That number is based on statistics from the 24-hour National Battery Ingestion Hotline.

The batteries only have a diameter of just over three-quarters of an inch (20 millimeters). But these small batteries are potentially dangerous when swallowed. They have a higher voltage than some other batteries, and can cause severe burns in the esophagus (the tube that carries food from the throat to the stomach) if they get stuck there.

The National Capital Poison Center said it was especially alarmed when its staff recently went shopping for flameless candle batteries. One product in particular stood out as more dangerous than others, and the center called for action from federal officials and the manufacturer.

"In the package we received were 24 loose button batteries, 12 tea lights containing batteries, and a remote control. The batteries were completely loose, with no child-resistant packaging protection," Dr. Toby Litovitz, medical director of the poison center, said in a news release from the center.

"The [battery](#) compartment of this flameless candle can also be opened easily by every child. It had no screw closure or secure child-resistant latch. A child could quickly access the candle's 20-millimeter lithium button battery."

If a child swallows one of these batteries, and it becomes lodged in the esophagus, it can cause damage in as little as two hours, Litovitz said.

The center provided these tips on handling [button batteries](#):

- Make sure battery compartments are shut on all devices that use batteries. Strong tape can be used if there's a risk that the compartments might pop open or be opened by kids.
- Consider only purchasing devices that need a screwdriver or tool to open the battery compartment. Or look for devices that make it difficult for kids to bypass controls on battery compartments.
- Lock up batteries and keep them away from children.

More information: For more about protecting kids from the risks of batteries, try the [National Capital Poison Center](#).

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