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For Immediate Release  
December 16, 2024

## Oklahoma Poison Center Urges Parents to Secure Button Batteries and Keep Kids Safe

Oklahoma City, OK – As the holiday season approaches, parents and caregivers are urged to take critical steps to protect young children from a hidden danger in their homes: button batteries. These small, round batteries power many popular toys, gadgets, and household devices, but they also pose a serious, often life-threatening risk if swallowed or inserted into the nose or ears.

“A button battery might seem like a tiny item, but it can be deadly,” says Kristie Edelen, managing director of the Oklahoma Poison Center, a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy. “If a child swallows a button battery, it can get stuck in the throat and cause a severe chemical burn, internal damage, or worse.”

Button batteries, especially those larger than a dime, can cause catastrophic harm if they lodge in a child’s narrow throat. An electrical current is created when the battery touches the tissue, generating hydroxide – a chemical that can burn through the tissue, leading to severe injuries or even death if not addressed immediately.

### How to Protect Your Kids:

- **Check and double-check:** Inspect all toys, decorations, and household devices that use button batteries. Ensure the battery compartments are tightly secured.
- **If it’s not screwed shut, it’s not safe:** Don’t trust battery compartments that are easily opened or that can pop open when dropped. Use strong tape to reinforce them.
- **Be vigilant when changing batteries:** Never change batteries in front of young children. They are curious and could easily access the batteries if left unattended.
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### If you suspect a button battery has been swallowed or inserted into the nose or ear, don’t wait!

- Call the **Oklahoma Poison Center** at 1-800-222-1222 immediately.
- Head to the emergency room for an X-ray — even if your child is not showing symptoms like coughing or choking, only an X-ray can confirm if the battery is lodged in the throat.

“Even if a child isn’t coughing or choking, a battery in the throat can cause silent damage that gets worse by the minute,” Edelen said. “It’s critical to act fast and get medical help.”

So far in 2024, the Oklahoma Poison Center has handled 10 cases of button battery ingestion in children under 5 years old. This number underscores the importance of keeping these tiny but dangerous batteries away from young children.

### Quick Tips for Parents & Caregivers:

- Store batteries out of sight and out of reach of young children.

- Choose toys and devices with battery compartments that can be tightly secured.
- Keep battery-powered devices off limits unless they are securely closed with a screw or locking mechanism.
- Supervise closely: Don't leave children unattended around devices that use button batteries.

**The Oklahoma Poison Center** is committed to keeping families safe this holiday season and beyond. By staying informed and taking a few simple precautions, you can help prevent these silent dangers from harming your loved ones. For more information on poisoning prevention and safety tips, visit [oklahomapoison.org](http://oklahomapoison.org).

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#### **About Oklahoma Poison Center**

Oklahoma Poison Center is dedicated to providing expert advice and support in cases of poisoning and exposure to harmful substances. Our mission is to prevent poisonings and reduce their impact through education, prevention, and providing emergency treatment recommendations. The Oklahoma Poison Center is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy.

#### **The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences**

The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences is one of the nation's few academic health centers with all health professions colleges — Allied Health, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health, and Graduate Studies. OU Health Sciences serves approximately 4,000 students in more than 70 undergraduate and graduate degree programs on campuses in Oklahoma City and Tulsa and is the academic and research partner of OU Health, the state's only comprehensive academic healthcare system. OU Health Sciences is ranked 129 out of over 2,849 institutions in funding received from the National Institutes of Health, according to the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research. For more information, visit [ouhsc.edu](http://ouhsc.edu).