

Button Battery Safety

The British and Irish Portable Battery Association (BIPBA)¹ takes the safety of consumers very seriously. We recognise that like many other everyday household items, button batteries can be harmful if swallowed.

BIPBA has joined forces with the Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) to try and reduce the likelihood and frequency of children swallowing button batteries. Our awareness campaign is designed to provide expert information and guidance to parents and professionals working with children and families on how to handle button batteries safely and the health risks associated with accidentally swallowing them. BIPBA is working with CAPT to provide safety advice, in the lead up to Christmas, when there are an increase of novelty items available for children to play with.

Further information about button battery safety can be found on [CAPT's website](#) or by visiting the [British and Irish Portable Battery Association website](#) to access the industry's button battery safety microsite, which is available in sixteen different languages.

More broadly, battery manufacturers are already:

- Placing warning notices and icons on packaging of small sized batteries (i.e. AAA and smaller) that are clear and easy to interpret. Some manufacturers even engrave warning symbols on the battery itself
- Making the battery packaging child resistant with individualised compartments, such that only one battery is accessible at a time
- Participating in the standards development process for battery-powered electronics and toys, with the focus on making access to batteries harder for children, such as ensuring secure battery compartments that require two simultaneous movements or a tool to open
- Working through the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)², and other standard setting organisations to continuously improve battery constructions, product safety and harmonisation of caution notices/safety pictograms
- Participating in education and outreach programmes through organisations like Poison Control Call Centres and national government safety organisations that increase awareness about the potential hazards associated with swallowing a button battery

Whilst we are informally aware of the research having been undertaken on Quantum Coating in the US, we understand it is not commercially available at this stage. BIPBA looks forward to hearing further developments in this area as battery manufacturers are continuously investigating new battery designs.

¹ Our members can be found [here](#).

² http://www.iec.ch/dyn/www/f?p=103:7:0:::FSP_ORG_ID,FSP_LANG_ID:1236,25

CAPT/BIPBA guidance if you suspect a child has swallowed a button battery – ACT FAST

- Take them straight to the A&E department at your local hospital or dial 999 or an ambulance
- Tell the doctor that you think your child has swallowed a button battery
- If you have the battery packaging or the product powered by the battery, take it with you. This will help the doctor identify the type of battery and make treatment easier
- Do not let your child eat or drink
- Do not make them sick
- Trust your instincts and act fast, do not wait to see if any symptoms develop

General Safety Tips

- Keep all spare batteries out of children's reach and sight, ideally in a high-up, lockable cupboard
- Keep products with batteries well out of reach if the battery compartment isn't secured with a screw
- Avoid toys from markets, discount stores or temporary shops as they may not conform to safety regulations and take care when buying online
- Teach older children that button batteries are dangerous and not to play with them or give them to younger brothers and sisters
- Remember that even used batteries can be dangerous, so recycle them safely.