

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Understand, Identify, Prevent: ESPGHAN Takes Action For #ButtonBatteryAwareness Day**

**The European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN), alongside the European Portable Battery Association (EPBA), are building on last year's success with the upcoming #ButtonBatteryAwareness Day to be held on June 12 2023.**

[08 June 2023] - Button battery ingestion (BBI) poses significant risks to children. Although seemingly harmless, button batteries found in household devices and children's toys can cause serious injury and fatality if ingested and not detected or treated promptly. Recognising the urgency of this issue, ESPGHAN is holding its second annual Button Battery Awareness Day on 12 June 2023. Part of a global campaign to increase understanding, identification and prevention of BBI, this day serves as a crucial platform to educate parents, caregivers, policymakers, and communities about the potential hazards, and equip them with the tools to prevent such incidents.

ESPGHAN is dedicated to driving change by raising awareness, advocating for improved safety measures, and producing evidence-based guidelines. When asked about the importance of the awareness day, Christos Tzivnikos, ESPGHAN Button Battery Initiative Task Force Lead, explains, "Improving awareness of BBI amongst parents, carers, and the general public, and educating them on how to mitigate the risks of it happening is a key step forward."

He continues, "Increasing public awareness requires the involvement of industry, media, schools, and the government in addition to medical professionals. That's why ESPGHAN already leads the way with this process, developing educational resources for parents and clinicians as well as lobbying at the European level for more focused legislation on button batteries."

ESPGHAN invites healthcare professionals, parents, caregivers, and the public to join forces and spread the word about this pressing issue. Everyone can play their part with just a few simple actions:

1. Spread awareness and follow the conversations on social media platforms with the hashtag #ButtonBatteryAwareness.
2. Educate your families, friends, and communities about the risks associated with BBI.
3. Stay informed about the latest safety recommendations and child-proofing techniques.
4. Ensure safe storage and disposal of button batteries to prevent accidental access by children.

Carole Bachmann, Secretary-General of EPBA, advises on how to ensure safe handling of button batteries, "When replacing the battery, make sure not to leave discarded button batteries laying loose around the house, ensure to securely close and store the remaining batteries in the packaging if any and ensure to securely fasten the battery compartment after replacing the button batteries of a product."

This June 12, help us ensure that no child has to suffer the effects of BBI again.

**ENDS**



## Notes to Editors

\*Full list of organisations: The European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN), European Portable Battery Association (EPBA).

# Button Battery Ingestion in Children

**UNDERSTAND**, **IDENTIFY** and **PREVENT** to save young lives

#ButtonBatteryAwareness

### UNDERSTAND: The Facts

- Button battery ingestion (BBI) can lead to **life-threatening complications and death** if not identified early and dealt with quickly, as damage can occur within 2 hours<sup>1</sup>
- There has been a **7-fold increase** in the risk of severe injury due to BBI in the last two decades<sup>2</sup>
- Most BBIs occur in children under **6 years old, with a peak in 1-year-olds**<sup>3,4</sup>

### IDENTIFY: The Symptoms<sup>1</sup>

- Drooling
- Swallowing difficulty/pain
- Coughing
- Abdominal pain
- Weight loss
- Vomiting or coughing up blood
- High-pitched wheezing sound when breathing
- Irritability
- Chest pain
- Fever
- Hoarseness
- Shortness of breath
- Black, sticky, tar-like faeces

*These symptoms cover both witnessed and unwitnessed ingestions*

### PREVENT: The Consequences

- Identify which devices use **button batteries** in your home (such as remote controls, watches and key fobs)?
- Do **not** leave discarded button batteries around the home – wrap waste batteries in clear tape, store them out of sight and reach of your children and dispose of them at a collection point as soon as possible<sup>5</sup>
- Securely **fasten the battery compartment** after replacing a button battery<sup>7</sup>

**IF YOU WITNESS OR SUSPECT YOUR CHILD HAS SWALLOWED A BUTTON BATTERY, SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION AT A HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM. DO NOT LET YOUR CHILD EAT OR DRINK. DO NOT INDUCE VOMITING.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Mubarek A, et al. J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr. 2019;68(1):129-135. <sup>2</sup> Rivkin MJ, et al. Child Care (2006) 84(1): 10-15. <sup>3</sup> Kooze T, et al. Pediatrics. 2019;123(4):e1168-1172. <sup>4</sup> Wang A, et al. Pediatrics. 2019;123(4):e1168-1172. <sup>5</sup> Child Development Center. Button Batteries: A Guide for Parents. Available at: <https://www.cdcc.org/parent-resources/button-batteries>. <sup>6</sup> Child Development Center. Button Batteries: A Guide for Parents. Available at: <https://www.cdcc.org/parent-resources/button-batteries>. <sup>7</sup> Button Batteries: A Guide for Parents. Available at: <https://www.cdcc.org/parent-resources/button-batteries>. Available at: <https://www.cdcc.org/parent-resources/button-batteries>. May 2019.



To find out more about the 2023 #ButtonBatteryAwareness Day, follow the conversation on Twitter via the hashtag, or visit @ESPGHANSociety. Download ESPGHAN's button battery manifesto and advice guides on the official website [here](https://www.espghan.org).

For a high resolution copy of the infographic containing information on how to understand, identify and prevent BBI, please download the image [here](https://www.espghan.org).

For further information, or to speak to an ESPGHAN expert, please contact Georgia Sermon at [media@espghan.org](mailto:media@espghan.org) or call +44 (0) 1353 780060.

## About Button Batteries

Button batteries are ubiquitous products used to power a large number of household items including toys, gadgets, watches, medical devices (hearing aids, thermometers, glucometers) small appliances (key fobs, remote controls). Children can access button batteries throughout their entire lifecycle; including when purchased new, from appliances as well as at the end of life. Currently in Europe, only toys are required to have durable, secure battery compartments.

Severe and fatal injuries are associated with the button battery becoming stuck in the oesophagus (food pipe). Diagnosis is challenging as many ingestions go unwitnessed by parents or carers, children (depending on their developmental age) may not be able to say what has happened and the symptoms of ingestion are often non-specific.



If you suspect your child has swallowed or inserted a button battery, please call your acute health service or Poisons service for advice or bring the child to the nearest hospital as soon as possible. An X-ray will confirm whether a button battery has been swallowed. Severe injuries can occur in only two hours.

For clinical advice from ESPGHAN's latest guideline, please visit:

[https://journals.lww.com/jpgn/Fulltext/2021/07000/Diagnosis,\\_Management,\\_and\\_Prevention\\_of\\_Button.27.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/jpgn/Fulltext/2021/07000/Diagnosis,_Management,_and_Prevention_of_Button.27.aspx)

For general advice, please visit: <https://buttonbatteryingestion.com/en>

### **About ESPGHAN**

The European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN) is a multi-professional organisation whose aim is to promote the health of children with special attention to the gastrointestinal tract, liver and nutritional status, through knowledge creation, the dissemination of science based information, the promotion of best practice in the delivery of care and the provision of high quality education for paediatric gastroenterology, hepatology and nutrition professionals in Europe and beyond. Find out more by visiting [www.espghan.org](http://www.espghan.org).

