

## ENERGIZER, KIDSAFE AND THE ACCC JOIN TOGETHER TO PREVENT BUTTON BATTERY INJURY

*“The Battery Controlled” Aims to Save Children’s Lives by Raising Awareness of a Growing Issue*

**SYDNEY, NSW**, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012 - Today, Energizer, Kidsafe, and The ACCC announce a critical partnership to share life-saving information with parents and caregivers about the potential risks associated with coin shaped lithium batteries. If swallowed, these batteries also referred to as button batteries, can lodge in a child’s oesophagus (food pipe). The saliva immediately triggers an electrical current, starting a chemical reaction that can cause severe burns to the oesophagus in as little as two hours. Whilst larger 10 cent sized button batteries are most frequently the cause of oesophageal injury, smaller batteries can also be hazardous and may be inserted in an ear or nose rather than swallowed. Even spent batteries have the potential to cause damage.

The formation of [“The Battery Controlled”](#) by Energizer, Kidsafe and The ACCC shines light on a growing issue and provides easy steps that parents and caregivers can take to prevent battery related injuries to children.

### Where the Risk Hides

Button batteries are found in everyday devices such as:

- Mini remote control devices that unlock car doors and control MP3 speakers
- Calculators
- Hearing aid devices
- Bathroom scales
- Reading lights
- Flameless candles
- Talking and singing books and greeting cards



### A Little-Known Threat

The threat is invisible, as these batteries are often inside compartments within electronic devices. Whilst children’s toys are required to have battery compartments secured with a screw locking system, this is not so for non toy products. Small children often have easy access to these devices, enjoy playing with them, and are able to open the battery compartment. Many parents do not know there is a risk. In fact, in a recent study by Energizer, only 27% of parents indicated that they were aware of the risks related to swallowing coin-sized lithium batteries.<sup>1</sup>

### Serious Complications and Deaths Are Increasing

Each year, about 3,500 button battery swallowing cases are reported to the U.S. poison control centres. The number of cases where children have been seriously hurt or have died has more than quadrupled in the past five years in the U.S. (2006-2010) compared to the five years prior (2001-2005), according to Dr. Toby Litovitz, of the National Capital Poison Center.

Dr. Ruth Barker, from the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit, has estimated that at least four children per week present to an emergency department in Australia, with an injury related to a button battery. If the battery ingestion is not recognized quickly enough, the battery can start to burn and erode through local tissue. This process starts in as little as an hour after exposure. The group at greatest risk is children under 3 years of age, who may be unable to explain that they have swallowed or inserted a battery. The damage sustained depends on the location of the battery and the direction it is facing. Repairing that damage is painful and can require feeding tubes, breathing tubes and multiple surgeries. The most serious injuries involve the battery burning from the oesophagus through to the airway (trachea) or major blood vessel (aorta).

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<sup>1</sup> Findings are based on a global online survey conducted among 500 parents of children ages 6 and younger living in private households in Australia, UK, Canada, France and Italy between September 28 and October 13, 2011.

### Steps for Parents and Caregivers

- Examine devices and make sure the battery compartment is secure.
- Keep coin-sized button batteries and devices out of sight and out of reach.
- Dispose of old button batteries immediately
- If swallowing of a button battery is suspected, go to the emergency room immediately.
- Call the Poisons Information Centre at 13 1126 for additional treatment information.
- Tell others about this threat and share these steps.

### Partnership Details

The Battery Controlled is a campaign supported by Energizer, in partnership with the ACCC and Kidsafe to alert parents and other carers to the hidden danger of swallowing button batteries.

Thanks to this partnership, life-saving information for parents, caregivers, local safety advocates and the medical community will be easily accessible. Tips for prevention and treatment will be distributed across Australia.

Videos, tip sheets and more information can be found at [www.thebatterycontrolled.com.au](http://www.thebatterycontrolled.com.au), [www.facebook.com/thebatterycontrolled](https://www.facebook.com/thebatterycontrolled) and [www.twitter.com/batterycontrol](https://www.twitter.com/batterycontrol).

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### About Energizer

Energizer Australia is committed to promoting the safe use of its products and is proactively working to increase the awareness of this potential hazard. For more information about Energizer, visit [www.energizerbatteries.com.au](http://www.energizerbatteries.com.au)

### About Kidsafe

Kidsafe, the Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia is a charity that has supported Australian families over the last 33 years. Kidsafe seeks to make the world a safer place for children by helping to prevent unintentional injuries. Kidsafe is involved in a variety of activities including provision of ongoing support services to families, advocacy, extensive injury prevention programs and research, media support programs and joint activities with a wide varieties of other community organisations, companies and Government agencies. Visit [www.kidsafe.org.au](http://www.kidsafe.org.au)

### About The ACCC

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is Australia's national product safety regulator. This role includes administering mandatory safety standards and bans, undertaking compliance and surveillance activities, and educating both suppliers and consumers on how to make, buy and use safe products. Visit [www.productsafety.gov.au](http://www.productsafety.gov.au) and [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au)

### Media Enquiries:

Sarah Court	The ACCC	<a href="mailto:media@accc.gov.au">media@accc.gov.au</a>	02 6243 1108
Eric Chalmers	Kidsafe	<a href="mailto:Chalmers@netspeed.com.au">Chalmers@netspeed.com.au</a>	0402 097 339
Susan Teerds	Kidsafe	<a href="mailto:Susant@kidsafeqld.com.au">Susant@kidsafeqld.com.au</a>	0411 104833