



French Directorate General for Health

Paris, 27 September 2018

Press release

Button batteries: ingestion by young children can have serious consequences

Button batteries are found in many products, including remote controls and certain toys. Serious and sometimes fatal accidents related to the ingestion of these button batteries by young children are regularly reported by the poison control centres.

Even in the absence of airway obstruction or other symptoms, ingestion of a button battery poses a serious threat to a child, because a swallowed battery can very quickly cause life-threatening injuries.

It is important for the people around young children to adopt the right reflexes, in order to prevent risks and act in the event of ingestion of button batteries, even when only suspected.

To avoid any risk, the following precautions must be taken:

- keep button batteries out of the reach of children (including used batteries);
- check that the battery compartment is secure and cannot be opened. If this is not the case, keep the object containing the button batteries out of the reach of children;
- try and purchase appliances whose battery compartments are secure (fastened with a screw or needing two independent manoeuvres to open them);
- **in the event of ingestion of a button battery, EVEN WHEN ONLY SUSPECTED, call a poison control centre or the emergency services (dial 15 in France) IMMEDIATELY and tell the operator explicitly that a child has ingested a button battery. Every minute counts!**

Each year in France, it is estimated that more than 1200 visits to hospital emergency departments are related to the ingestion of button batteries. The vast majority of them concern children aged 0-5 years.

Over the period 2015-2018, the DGCCRF tested 133 electric toys. Five of these were found to be non-compliant, as the button batteries were accessible. This led to luminous fidget-spinners being withdrawn from the market. The DGCCRF continues to monitor the accessibility of batteries in electric toys and will also focus on the safety of button battery packaging. These investigations, carried out at all stages of the market, are designed to prevent the risks that can arise from the inappropriate use of button batteries, particularly by young children.

As part of a joint initiative, the Directorate General for Health (DGS), the Directorate General for Competition, Consumer Affairs and Fraud Control (DGCCRF) and the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES) are working with professionals involved in the marketing of batteries or products containing button batteries, to improve product safety and prevent accidents.

Poison control centres: <http://www.centres-antipoison.net/>

Press liaison:

DGS: presse-dgs@sante.gouv.fr - Tel.: +33 (0)1 40 56 84 00 - @AlerteSanitaire
DGCCRF: communication@dgccrf.finances.gouv.fr - Tel.: +33 (0)1 44 97 23 91
ANSES: presse@anses.fr - Tel.: +33 (0)1 49 77 22 26 / 13 77 - @Anses_fr