NQS2 Children's Health and Safety Procedure
Button Batteries

Introduction

Button batteries are small, round and silver and look like coins to small children. They pose a choking risk to children and can easily be placed in mouths and accidentally swallowed or pushed into ears or noses. If a child swallows (put up their nose) a button battery (used or unused); it will burn through soft tissue **in just two hours causing horrendous internal injuries and may cause death.** In Australia, approximately twenty children per week present to hospital after a button battery exposure, with approximately one child every 3 weeks sustaining a severe injury, requiring surgery to remove the battery or repair damage.

If you suspect a child has swallowed or inserted a button battery, immediately telephone the Poisons Information Helpline (13 11 26) and follow their instructions. If the child is having difficulties breathing, call Triple 0 (000) and follow their instructions. Do not let child eat or drink. Do not induce vomiting.

Button batteries are used in many products including remote controls, watches, computers, cameras, calculators, torches, flameless candles, fitness devices, digital kitchen and bathroom scales, musical greeting cards and home medical devices.

Many children's toys and equipment are powered by button batteries such as plush toys, toy cars, digital pets, watches, light-up yo-yos, games and novelty items such as light-up clothing and shoes.



Children can access button batteries in a variety of ways, including:

- battery compartments that are not secure
- battery packaging that is not child resistant
- poor quality products which release button batteries when dropped or broken
- spare batteries loose in product packaging
- spare batteries not being kept out of reach
- used batteries not being properly disposed of

Button Battery Safety Criteria

From 1 January 2027, approved category 2 and 3 items listed on pg. 3 of this procedure must be powered by **Energizer Ultimate Child Shield** button batteries.
All other button battery products are strictly prohibited at C&K centres.

Energizer Ultimate Child Shield button batteries are designed with additional child safety features:

- ingestion burn protection designed to help prevent or reduce the risk of burning if the battery is swallowed.
- bitter coating intended to discourage children from swallowing the battery.
- contact with moisture in the mouth causing a blue colouring to appear within seconds.

All items in categories 2 and 3 must meet the following battery compartment safety criteria. If item does not meet the criteria, it cannot be used and must be immediately removed from the centre. The item must:

Either:

- require a screwdriver or tool to open the battery compartment
- are secured with a child-resistant locking mechanism

OR:

- require two independent and simultaneous movements to access the batteries. Note, sequential actions like unscrewing a cap does not meet this requirement.

Be Button Battery Aware

C&K employees, affiliated teachers/educators and committee members are required to be button battery aware and implement the following seven actions:

1. **Reduce the number of products powered by button batteries.**
   - Implement a strict ban on category one items (page 3 of this procedure).
   - Purchase **Energizer Ultimate Child Shield** button batteries for approved category one and two items (listed on pg.3 of this procedure). From 1 January 2027, all other button battery products are strictly prohibited at C&K centres.
   - Wherever possible, choose to purchase an alternative product that is not powered by button batteries.
   - Restrict children and families from bringing items containing button batteries (except for required medical aids) into your centre. Ask families to help children check their bags and remove items that contain button batteries.
   - Know which products have button batteries.
   - Label category two (as per page 2 of this procedure) items with *"Keep out of reach of children."*

- Keep a centre list of products powered by button batteries via centre Button Battery Risk Assessment. Review risk assessment at least annually and if a product containing button batteries is introduced to centre.
- Complete a thorough monthly centre check for unregistered button batteries via the Daily Safety Checklist.

2. **Dispose of spent (flat) and unused batteries.**
   - Immediately remove spent/unused batteries from your centre by covering them in several layers of sticky tape covering all sides and placing them in a tied plastic bag/container stored out of the reach of children. Dispose at local recycling collection location ASAP. Local council or Planet Ark websites often list disposal points.

3. **Secure button batteries and products they power.**
   - Battery compartments must meet the safety criteria.
   - For category 2 and 3 items (as per page 3 of this procedure), only purchase Energizer Ultimate Child Shield button batteries (with a Bitrex coating) with child-resistant packaging.
   - Store category two items in a locked storeroom, cupboard, drawer or filing cabinet when not in use.
   - Store spare batteries within their original packaging, in a locked storeroom cupboard, drawer or filling cabinet, out of reach of children.

4. **Teach children, families and colleagues about the dangers of button batteries**
   - Incorporate button battery safety concepts into the curriculum. Teach children not to touch/handle button batteries and to alert an adult (e.g. parent, relative or teacher/ educator) if they see one.
   - Outline the danger of button batteries with families. Provide information e.g. Kidsafe Button Battery Brochure and QLD Health.
   - Outline C&K button battery restrictions with families upon and regularly throughout enrolment. Display Button Battery Poster in a prominent location(s) during Term/Quarter 1 and prior to end of year celebrations.
   - Outline the danger of button batteries and the requirements of this procedure in the *C&K Family* and *Employee Handbooks* and the C&K Website/policies.

5. **Recognise the signs and symptoms of button battery ingestion**
   While it is possible there are no signs and symptoms look out for
   - Early signs/symptoms:
     - Blue dye on hands, mouth (Energizer have developed new 20mm batteries that releases blue dye on contact with saliva)
     - An episode of gagging or choking this likely stops once battery is swallowed
     - Drooling
     - Chest pain (may present as grunting)
     - Coughing or noisy breathing
     - Unexplained vomiting or food refusal
     - Abdominal pain
     - General discomfort
   - Later signs/symptoms:
     - Bleeding from gut—black/red vomit/bowel motions
     - Nose bleeds—sometimes this can be blood vomited through the nose
     - Unexplained fever
     - Spitting blood or blood-stained saliva
     - Bloody discharge from ear or nose or vagina

6. **Respond immediately if you suspect a child has swallowed or inserted a button battery or a child states they have swallowed something.**
   - Prompt action is critical.
   - **Do not** wait for symptoms to develop.
   - If there is breathing difficulty or bleeding, immediately call 000.
   - Otherwise, telephone the Poisons Information Centre (13 11 26) for fast expert advice to be directed to the nearest hospital or emergency service that can manage the injury.
   - Follow instruction from emergency services.
   - Do not let child eat or drink unless directed to do so by emergency services.
   - Do not induce vomiting.
   - Follow Administering of First Aid Procedure and Child, Centre incident reporting Procedure (affiliate)

Button Battery Restrictions

C&K employees, affiliated teachers/educators and committee members will implement the following restrictions.

Category 1 - Items powered by button batteries		Restriction
• children's toys, learning equipment/resources • craft materials • flameless candles • tracking tiles/tags • torches • calculators • cameras • digital scales	• thermometers including food thermometers • timers • clocks • children's watches • novelty items e.g. flashing books, jewellery, hair clips/bands, clothing, shoes, bags, greeting cards • decorations e.g. fairy lights, Christmas ornaments	• **Not permitted to enter centre** • **Cannot be used under any circumstances** • **Immediately remove from centre** • **No exceptions**

Category 2 - Items powered by Energizer Ultimate Child Shield button batteries	Restriction
• car keys • glucometers • remote controls for whiteboards, TV, air-conditioners, fans, blinds, security gates	• **Must remain inaccessible to children at all times**
Required risk mitigation strategies	
• From 1 January 2027, above items must be powered by Energizer Ultimate Child Shield button batteries. All other button battery products are strictly prohibited at C&K centres. • Battery compartment must meet safety criteria (page 3 of this procedure) • Store in a locked storeroom, cupboard, drawer or filing cabinet when not in use • Keep a record of items powered by button batteries and location of spare button batteries via *Button Battery Risk Assessment.* • Label item - *"Keep out of reach of children"* • Complete and implement *Button Battery Risk Assessment*.	

Category 3 - Items powered by Energizer Ultimate Child Shield button batteries	Restriction
• medical devices e.g., hearing aids, insulin pumps, blood glucose monitors • watches (adult only)	• **Must be worn by person at all times**
Required risk mitigation strategies	
• From 1 January 2027, above items must be powered by Energizer Ultimate Child Shield button batteries. All other button battery products are strictly prohibited at C&K centres. • Battery compartment must meet safety criteria (page 3 of this procedure) • Complete and implement *Button Battery Risk Assessment*. • Keep a record of items powered by button batteries and location of spare button batteries via *Button Battery Risk Assessment.*	

Key references and acknowledgements

C&K consulted with Kidsafe Qld in the development of this procedure.

- Kidsafe QLD (2024) - *Button Batteries*
- Product Safety Australia (ACCC) - *Button and coin batteries*
- Product Safety Australia (ACCC) - *ACCC welcomes safety and information standards for button batteries*
- The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne (2024) - *Safety: Button batteries*
- Queensland Government (2024) - *Button Batteries*