

News Release Minister Gail Gago

Minister for Employment, Higher Education and Skills
Minister for Science and Information Economy
Minister for the Status of Women
Minister for Business Services and Consumers

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Parents warned: children and button batteries don't mix

South Australian parents are being warned about the severe dangers of children ingesting button batteries.

Minister for Business Services and Consumers Gail Gago said the state's consumer watchdog is jumping on board the inaugural International Awareness Week for button battery safety.

"Button batteries, while quite small, are made of lithium and if the battery becomes stuck in a child's throat this can result in severe burns or even fatalities," Minister Gago said.

"In 2012/13 eight children, aged ten years and under, were admitted to the paediatric emergency department at the Women's and Children's Hospital for swallowing or choking on a button battery.

"Incidents are most common amongst small children and toddlers. The majority of cases involve children aged three years or under."

Button batteries are used in many common household products, such as children's toys, calculators, small remote controls, and small electronics.

Ms Gago said parents can follow some simple tips to keep their children safe.

"Parents are urged to ensure that these batteries are kept out of sight and out of reach from their children," she said.

"Where your household devices require a battery, make sure that the battery compartment is firmly secured.

"And make sure you examine devices periodically and make sure the battery compartments are secure.

"Once you have finished using your batteries disposed of them immediately as even flat batteries can be hazardous.

"If you suspect your child has swallowed a button battery do not let them eat or drink, do not induce vomiting. Immediately take them to the nearest hospital emergency department."

International Awareness Week for button battery safety takes place from 16 to 20 June in 14 countries. For more information about button battery safety, including safety tips and precautions, visit www.productsafety.gov.au