Foreign body ingestion in children

Information for parents

This leaflet is intended to advise parents of the procedure for managing a child who has swallowed something.

Most swallowed objects pass through the digestive system without any problems once they have reached the stomach. Metal coins are the most common and often harmless type of objects swallowed by children.

Batteries, especially button / disc batteries, magnets and items containing lead have the potential for more serious complications. It is important to tell the doctor if these types of items have been swallowed as they are termed ‘hazardous’.

Attendance to A&E

Today your child will have been assessed with a metal detector alone or in conjunction with an X-ray as determined by local guidelines for foreign body ingestion.

We are satisfied the object has safely passed into the stomach or further in the digestive tract and it is likely to be passed through their system and be seen in their stool (poo) within a few days.

General advice following A&E attendance

It is not necessary to examine the stool to check for passage of the item.

Please do watch for abdominal pain, vomiting or blood passed in stool. Although complications are unlikely, these symptoms do warrant a further review by a doctor in Children’s A&E.

Ingestion of button battery or potentially hazardous object

Your doctor will have asked you to return for a repeat X-ray on day 4 following the initial ingestion and presentation to A&E.
Prior to this time please follow the general advice given above but allow your child to eat and drink and do things normally in the interim.

Who should I contact if I have a problem or question?

- NHS direct on ‘111’ (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)
- Try to arrange appointment with your GP
- Attend A&E

Languages/ Alternative Formats

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format. Please contact: 01895 279973

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Jeżeli chciałbyś uzyskać te informacje w innym języku, w dużej czcionce lub w formacie audio, poproś pracownika oddziału o kontakt z biurem informacji pacjenta (patient information) pod numerem telefonu: 01895 279973.

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