

Why small parts can hurt or kill your child

Choking is fast becoming one of the biggest causes of accidental deaths for the under 5s. Understanding the risks and keeping your child away from hazards could save a life.

Why are small parts becoming such a concern?

Hazards from small parts are on the rise, with many tragic incidents making headlines in recent years. In May 2021, the National Health Service called for a ban of tiny magnetic balls, marketed to young children on social media as fake piercings. More than 60 children were admitted to hospital for urgent surgery. This is just one example of many toy-related hazards reported to Trading Standards. In other worrying cases, Trading Standards revealed:

- The death of a 17-month-old baby after choking on a button cell battery
- The seizure of 3,000 dangerous toys with choking hazards
- The recall of children's teething toys which were found to have loose parts.

*Sources: British Medical Journal, NHS England, Child Accident Prevention Trust.

Did you know?

- In 2019, 15 toy products were recalled for choking hazards.
- Coins are the most commonly swallowed non-food products in young children.
- More than one in five (21%) of choking-related hospital visits was due to swallowing magnets.

Where to keep a lookout for hazards

Toys and everyday household items can present extreme danger to small children. In some cases, ingestion may result in fatal choking or gastrointestinal surgery. Keep a lookout for the following small parts in your home:

- Button batteries
- Teddy bear eyes
- Fidget spinners
- Plastic toy food
- Magnetic charms for glasses
- Adult desk toys
- Fake piercings
- Fridge magnets
- Hearing aids
- Thermometers
- Watches
- Calculators

Secure any loose parts or keep them out of reach of children – ideally at a height or out of your home entirely.

If you're concerned about the safety of a product, contact your local Trading Standards Service

